







MASTERS OF  
LITERATURE  
CARLYLE

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Thomas Carlyle

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# CARLYLE

EDITED BY

A. W. EVANS



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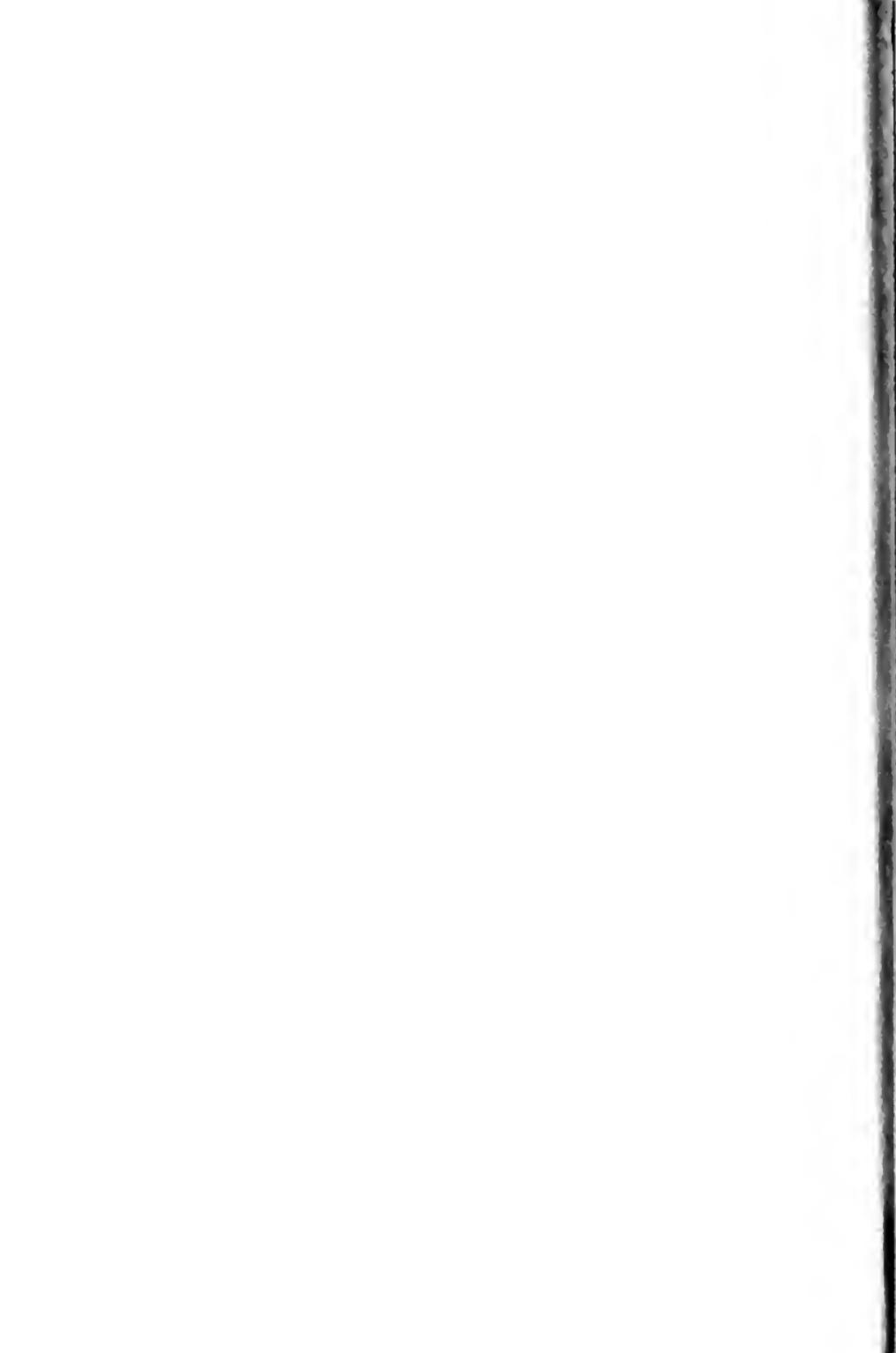
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## INTRODUCTION

FOR more than twenty-five years of his lifetime Carlyle occupied a place among his contemporaries which is very nearly unique in the history of English men of letters. Men of all schools and of all parties listened for the oracles delivered at Chelsea with veneration, enthusiasm, doubt, dissent, or amusement, but always with close attention. His denunciations of what displeased him in life or in letters were passed about from mouth to mouth and laughed at or applauded, while his approval of a scheme or of a movement was looked upon by those (and they were not many) who received it as a testimonial of the highest worth. He was, in short, almost an English institution. And this ascendancy was quite as much a tribute to his character as an acknowledgment of his genius. Men felt that he had reached his convictions by the road of personal experience as well as of ardent intellectual toil, that he had taught himself before he took it upon himself to teach others, and that whatever value might be attributed to the message he delivered, there could be no shadow of doubt regarding its sincerity. Like Dr. Johnson, with whom, in spite of many points of dissimilarity, Carlyle had a great deal in common, his position was due to what he was as much as to what he had written. Johnson, an Englishman of Englishmen, a Tory and a Royalist, content to accept the teaching of the Church of England with scarcely a movement of doubt, was, as Carlyle himself discerned, gifted by nature for "the noblest of earthly tasks, that of Priesthood and guidance of mankind." Carlyle, a thorough Scotsman, who thought

that the best use for the "sorry stuff" that had been written about the Divine Right of Kings, was to let it "moulder unread in the Public Libraries of the country," whose creed might be summed up as Calvinistic Puritanism from which Christianity had evaporated, in politics a reformer if not a revolutionist, felt called upon to take up the task for which he said that Johnson was fitted. Both men were combative, uncompromising in utterance, fierce and domineering in discussion, externally stern and rugged, yet at bottom full of tenderness and affection. Each was a brilliant talker and owed much of his reputation to the force and charm of his conversation. Each developed a peculiar literary style which, though admirable when employed by its inventor, has never been imitated without disaster. Finally, there is a great similarity in the essential message of each, and Carlyle's insistence upon veracity is but another way of putting Johnson's advice to "clear our minds of cant."

It is customary to describe Carlyle as a great Prophet or a great Teacher. In a sense it cannot be denied that he was both. But many of those who have most benefited from his teaching have abandoned the greater number of its distinctive tenets. They have a great admiration for the author, while mistrusting nearly everything that he has said. Huxley has placed on record the different ways in which he and Tyndall were affected by reading Carlyle. "Tyndall and I," he writes, "had long been zealous students of Carlyle's works . . . and my sense of obligation to the author was then, as it remains, extremely strong. Tyndall's appreciation of the Seer of Chelsea was even more enthusiastic; and in after years assumed a character of almost filial devotion. The grounds of our appreciation, however, were not exactly the same. My friend, I think, was disposed to regard Carlyle as a great teacher; I was rather inclined to take him as a great tonic,—as a source of intellectual and moral stimulus and refreshment, rather than of theoretical and practical guidance." The attitude of Huxley rather than that of

Tyndall, is the one which has gained ground. For most of his readers to-day, Carlyle is a great Awakener. But he is also a great literary artist. As time goes on it is under these two aspects, as a great Awakener and as a great Artist, that he must come more and more to be judged.

### CARLYLE'S LIFE

CARLYLE'S life, like that of most men of letters, was unbroken by any great external incident. He made no attempt to enter public life or to influence the world except through his writings. The interest of his biography lies in the development of his mind and the formation of his opinions; its chief events are the successive appearances of his books.

Thomas Carlyle was born at Ecclefechan, a small village in Annandale, on December 4, 1795. His father, James Carlyle, was a stone-mason coming from a stock noted for resolution and independence, "pithy, bitter-speaking bodies," said a neighbour, "and awfu' fighters." According to his son's account, James Carlyle was a man of great force of character, deep religious feeling, and unusual ability. "In several respects I consider my father as one of the most interesting men I have known. He was a man of perhaps the largest natural endowment of any it has been my lot to converse with. None of us will ever forget that bold, glowing style of his, flowing free from his untutored soul, full of metaphors (though he knew not what a metaphor was) with all manner of potent words which he appropriated and applied with a surprising accuracy you often could not guess whence—brief, energetic, and which I should say conveyed the most perfect picture, definite, clear, not in ambitious colours but in a full white sunlight, of all dialects I have ever listened to. Nothing did I ever hear him attempt

to render visible which did not become almost ocularly so."<sup>1</sup> He had, however, his forbidding side. All the household feared his anger and looked towards him with respect rather than affection. "We had all to complain that we durst not freely love him. His heart seemed as if walled in; he had not the free means to unbosom himself. . . . It seemed as if an atmosphere of fear repelled us from him." Margaret Aitken, his second wife and Carlyle's mother, fully made up for this want of sympathy. Of gentle disposition and tremulously eager for her son's welfare, both temporal and eternal, it was her dearest wish as well as that of his father that he should become a Minister of the Presbyterian Church. His later unorthodoxy was a grief to them both, and touched with a little disappointment their pride in him and his books. Carlyle's relations with his parents were always pleasant; trustful and forbearing upon their part, loyal and grateful upon his. The bond between him and his mother was a particularly tender one. She learned writing in order to be able to communicate with him, and, as Dr. Garnett remarks, nothing is more touching than the father's picture of the good woman, "so slow a writer" that she cannot compass a letter to her son during the two days that the carrier stays in the village.<sup>2</sup>

From the second book of *Sartor Resartus* (which is confessedly autobiographical) we get some charming glimpses of his early life. We can picture the little village boy clad in "a vesture one and indivisible, reaching from neck to ankle, a mere body with four limbs," playing among the beech-trees that bordered the village stream, watching the stage-coach pass through on its way to Glasgow, or listening in silent wonder to the talk of a group of his elders at nightfall. We can imagine, too, the beginnings of his love of

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences*. By Thomas Carlyle, Vol. I. "James Carlyle of Ecclefechan." Longmans, 2 vols. 1881.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of Thomas Carlyle*. By Richard Garnett, LL.D. In "Great Writers" series. Walter Scott. 1887. This little book is by far the best short life of Carlyle.

nature as described in the following passage which has been so often quoted—

“On fine evenings I was wont to carry-forth my supper (bread-crumb boiled in milk), and eat it out-of-doors. On the coping of the Orchard-wall, which I could reach by climbing, or still more easily if Father Andreas would set-up the pruning-ladder, my porringer was placed; there, many a sunset, have I, looking at the distant western mountains, consumed, not without relish, my evening meal. Those hues of gold and azure, that hush of World’s expectation as Day died, were still a Hebrew speech for me; nevertheless I was looking at the fair illuminated Letters, and had an eye for their gilding.”

Those early years were years of toil, frugality, and restraint. At the age of five he went to the village school. Two years later he was reported to be “complete in English,” and, as the school-master did not know Latin, lessons were given him by the Minister of Ecclefechan and his son, an Edinburgh student. He made rapid progress, and on Whit-Monday 1805, “a bright morning of fluttering boundless hopes,” he trotted along by his father’s side to enter Annan Grammar School as a first step to the University and the Ministry. The step was taken against the advice of a neighbour who said to the elder Carlyle, “Educate a boy, and he grows up to despise his ignorant parents.” “Thou hast not done so, God be thanked for it,” said the father, when, long afterwards, he told the incident to his son. “With a noble faith,” is Carlyle’s reflection, “he launched me forth into a world which he himself had never been permitted to visit.” At Annan he spent two miserable years. The young Carlyle was shy and sensitive, and, as often happens, these qualities were accompanied by a violent temper. Before he entered the school his mother had made him promise that he would never return a blow, with the result that he had to put up with a great deal of bullying and cruelty. At last, goaded to frenzy, he turned upon one of his tormentors and, though beaten in the encounter, the incident put an end to his persecutions. After two years at Annan he had learnt to read Latin and French

with fluency, a fair amount of geometry and algebra, and the Greek alphabet. He had also begun to be interested in history, Robertson's *Charles V* opening up for him "new worlds of knowledge, vistas in all directions."

At the age of fourteen he set out on a "dark frosty November morning," his mother and father accompanying him part of the way, to walk the eighty miles that lay between Ecclefechan and Edinburgh University. Here his life was like that of most Scottish peasant lads of his time who managed to win a University education. He went through the usual curriculum from 1809 to 1814, staying at cheap lodgings and living upon oatmeal, potatoes, and butter, brought by the Ecclefechan carrier. The letters of his student days that have been preserved show him as the central figure of a group of undergraduates all fired by literary ambition.<sup>1</sup> But Edinburgh University was not a congenial home. "It is my painful duty," he exclaims in *Sartor Resartus*, "to say that out of England and Spain, ours was the worst of all hitherto discovered Universities." The Professors were certain persons stationed at the gates "to declare aloud that it was a University and exact considerable admission fees," and do little more for the education of their pupils. The picture is greatly exaggerated. The Professors were, to say the least, men of respectable attainments and diligence. Two of them—Leslie and Christison—helped to forward Carlyle's career before he had given the world any proof of unusual talent, and, moreover, Leslie awoke in him "a certain enthusiasm" for mathematics which bore fruit ten years after he left the University in a translation of Legendre's *Geometry* with an introductory essay on "Proportion" which De Morgan pronounced to be "as good a substitute for the fifth book of Euclid as could be given in speech, and quite enough to show that he could have been a distinguished teacher and thinker in first principles."

<sup>1</sup> *Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle*. Edited by Charles Eliot Norton. Macmillan. 2 vols. 1886.

In 1814 Carlyle left Edinburgh and engaged for a time in what was to him the distasteful profession of a school-master. He had gradually come to the conclusion that he could not honestly become a clergyman, and by school-mastering he would be independent until he decided upon his future course. He taught first at Annan, and later at Kirkcaldy, where he became intimate with Edward Irving, then master of a school there, but preparing for his coming ordination. This friendship with Irving was of the highest value to Carlyle and remained unclouded up to Irving's death. "But for Irving," he says, "I had never known what the communion of man with man means." Irving lent him books which he read with "greedy velocity," but the most valuable part of the friendship was the opportunity it gave for discussion of the great spiritual problems which already occupied Carlyle's mind. In an unforgettable sentence Carlyle describes how the two friends used to walk on "the beach of Kirkcaldy in summer twilight, a mile of smoothest sand, with one long wave coming on gently, steadily, and breaking in gradual explosion into harmless melodious white, at your hand all the way; the break of it rushing along like a mane of foam,"<sup>1</sup> while they spoke of Carlyle's doubts and Irving's convictions. The student of French literature is reminded of similar conversations between the youthful Sainte-Beuve and the future Abbé Barbe on the sands of Boulogne. The four years spent at Annan and Kirkcaldy were years of close industry on Carlyle's part. He read voraciously, Gibbon in particular, which he got through at the rate of a volume a day, making a great impression upon him. "Gibbon," he wrote, "one never forgets unless oneself deserving to be forgotten; the perusal of his work forms an epoch in the history of one's mind."<sup>2</sup>

The two friends left Kirkcaldy in 1818, and took

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences*. By Thomas Carlyle. "Edward Irving." Longmans. 2 vols. 1881.

<sup>2</sup> *The Love Letters of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh*. Edited by Alexander Carlyle. Lane. 2 vols. 1909.

lodgings in Edinburgh, Irving within a few months to become Dr. Chalmers' assistant at Glasgow, Carlyle, without any definite prospects, to enter upon the four or five "most miserable, dark, sick and heavy-laden years" of his life. Irregular meals and over-application to study had undermined his health, and dyspepsia, "like a rat gnawing at the pit of his stomach," had laid a lasting hold upon him. He was, besides, passing through the great spiritual crisis of his life. His rejection of orthodox Christianity had left him in "wanderings through mazes of doubt, perpetual questionings unanswered," and there seemed no way of escape from the dreary, materialistic interpretation of the universe against which his whole soul revolted. He had some thoughts of becoming an engineer, and studied mineralogy but soon gave it up, though his interest in the science had a momentous effect upon his life for it led him to begin German. He next tried law, but abandoned that also for the reason that it offered no amends for its miseries except its money. His one consolation during this period was the attitude of his whole family, who, without understanding his difficulties, were yet full of affectionate sympathy. His father had now taken a farm at Mainhill, and Carlyle found that frequent visits there were some relief from his moods of black depression. The scanty income derived from occasional pupils and some articles in Brewster's *Edinburgh Encyclo-pedia* was eked out by rations of oatmeal and butter from Mainhill.

From this mood of despair Carlyle was delivered by a moment of illumination which he describes in the chapter called "The Everlasting No" in *Sartor Resartus*. He calls it his "spiritual new birth" and dates it in June 1821 when, after "three weeks of total sleeplessness," as he was passing through Leith Walk, Edinburgh, the incident happened. We shall have something further to say about it in a later section, and here merely note that it was a turning-point in Carlyle's history, though his study of German literature, especially Goethe, helped towards his spiritual deliverance.

Another event, which also happened in June 1821, may have also done something to restore Carlyle's equanimity. Irving had as pupil a brilliant girl called Jane Baillie Welsh, who was at this time living with her mother at Haddington. There had been a love affair between the two, but Irving was now engaged to the woman who afterwards became his wife. He was also on the point of setting out for London, and thought that Carlyle might with advantage supervise Miss Welsh's studies. Carlyle and Irving paid a visit to Haddington, and there at once began a friendship between Carlyle and Miss Welsh which ended in their marriage in 1826. Into the unpleasant controversy regarding their married life it is not necessary to enter here. Froude gave the impression that, beginning without the feeling of love that should unite man and wife, it was a long series of domestic discords. The correspondence published by Mr. Alexander Carlyle and Professor Norton refutes this view. The match was a love match in the fullest sense. And though both Carlyle and Mrs. Carlyle were extremely sensitive, prone to exaggerate grievances, and hasty in speech and act, it is now established that their marriage, if broken by a fair share of domestic jars, was upon the whole a happy one.

Shortly after his arrival in London, Irving was consulted by a Mrs. Buller about the education of her two sons. He recommended Carlyle as a tutor, and, after some negotiations, Carlyle accepted the post in January 1822 at a salary of £200 a year. He remained for two years as tutor to the Bullers, finding time to continue his German studies, which resulted in the publication of the *Life of Schiller* in the *London Magazine* for 1823-4 and his translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. He also arranged for other German translations, and now felt that he might enter upon a literary career with some hope of success. His *Life of Schiller* and *Wilhelm Meister* had been successful and had won the notice of Goethe, from whom he received a complimentary letter. He had seen London and Paris, and

believed that he was not incapable of producing work which might be compared with that of some of those who had won eminence in the literary world. Accordingly, he gave up his tutorship and retired to Hoddam Hill, the farm now occupied by his family, so as to continue his translations and meditate upon future plans. With the elder of his pupils, Charles Buller, a man of brilliant promise who will long be remembered for his share in the composition of Lord Durham's famous Report on Canada, he preserved the most friendly relations until Buller's untimely death in 1848.

In 1826 he married Miss Welsh and set up house at Comely Bank, Edinburgh, whence, two years later, they removed to Craigenputtock, a lonely farm in Dumfriesshire, that was part of Mrs. Carlyle's inheritance. This latter step was caused partly by a desire for quiet, but chiefly by financial stress. While at Edinburgh he formed a useful acquaintance with Jeffrey, then editing the *Edinburgh Review*. Carlyle became contributor, and during the six years he spent at Craigenputtock he wrote for the *Edinburgh*, the *Foreign Review*, and *Fraser's Magazine*, many of the great essays republished in the *Miscellanies*. He was now recognised as one of the foremost interpreters of German thought to England, and Emerson, on his way home from Italy, paid a cheering visit to the Carlyles upon their distant farm. To Emerson Carlyle was greatly indebted. He encouraged him when encouragement was needed, and a few years later, just when funds were urgently necessary, secured for Carlyle payments for the American sale of his books. At Craigenputtock, too, he wrote *Sartor Resartus*, which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* for 1833-34, and had resolved upon his *History of the French Revolution*. But though his reputation was rising, he still found it difficult to obtain a hearing or to secure remuneration for his work. Jeffrey had ceased to edit the *Edinburgh Review*, and *Sartor Resartus* called forth a crowd of complaining letters from the subscribers to *Fraser's Magazine*. One critic called it a "heap of clotted nonsense," and only two voices were raised in its defence, those of

Emerson and Father O'Shea, a Roman Catholic priest at Cork. Murray, Longman, and Fraser refused to publish it as a book, and altogether Carlyle's prospects seemed to have clouded over. He had, however, made some literary acquaintances in London—among others John Stuart Mill—and in 1834, upon his wife's advice, he resolved to "burn his boats" and try his fortunes in the capital.

He settled down at the house in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, that was to be his home for the remainder of his life, and began work upon the *French Revolution*. Mill had suggested the subject and lent him books, and in March 1835 the first volume was completed. Both Carlyle and Mrs. Carlyle had set great hopes upon this work, but a terrible misfortune was in store for them. Mill borrowed the manuscript and lent it to Mrs. Taylor, at whose house it was burned through the carelessness of a servant. Nothing could be finer than the way Carlyle received the calamity. His first words to his wife, when Mill had left after telling the news, were, "Well, Mill, poor fellow, is terribly cut up; we must endeavour to hide from him how very serious the business is to us." To a man situated as Carlyle then was, and for whom the labour of literary composition was so exhausting, it was indeed serious. Mill did what he could to repair the loss and offered £200, the half of which was accepted by Carlyle with reluctance. Always writing in a mood of mental exaltation, Carlyle found it difficult to force himself to his task again and took refuge by reading a course of Marryat's novels. However, he set to work, and the book was at last finished in January 1837. He had in the meantime written some essays for the reviews, but funds were still scanty, and at Miss Martineau's suggestion he determined to give a course of public lectures. Miss Martineau collected subscriptions, and the lectures upon "German Literature" were delivered at Willis's Rooms in May 1837. They were highly successful and brought him in £135. Three other series of lectures followed: "The Whole Spiritual History of Man from

the Earliest Times until Now," in 1838, the "French Revolution," in 1839, and "Heroes and Hero-Worship," in 1840. As a lecturer, Carlyle caused something of a sensation. The novelty of his views, his earnestness, and manner of speech, which latter he himself compared to "wild Annandale grape-shot," drew large audiences. He could henceforth feel more free from pecuniary anxiety.

During the next few years Carlyle steadily rose towards fame. His *French Revolution* had appeared and been greatly talked about, his pamphlet on "Chartism" ran into a second edition within a year, *Heroes and Hero-Worship* was published as a book and sold well, as did also *Sartor Resartus* and the *Miscellanies*. The house at Chelsea became an intellectual centre, visited by Mill, Sterling, Frederic Denison Maurice, Lockhart, Thirlwall, Venables, Spedding, Monckton Milnes, and others. The world of society, too, began to look upon Carlyle as a literary lion, dangerous when roused, but a decided acquisition to its dinner-parties. Want of inclination as well as his chronic dyspepsia prevented him from being a great dinner-out, though he mixed to some extent in general society and formed friendships with a few people of high social position, that with Lord and Lady Ashburton being the closest and most notable.

His next undertaking was the *Cromwell*, intended at first to be a history of the Civil War. He worked hard at all the available materials, and over and over again despaired of being able to produce anything of value or interest. "Four years of abstruse toil, obscure speculations, futile wrestling, and misery," is how he sums up his labours. They met with two interruptions. The first was the death of Mrs. Carlyle's mother in 1842. Carlyle went at once to Templand, where he was detained by business arrangements for over six weeks, writing periodically to his wife letters which, in their tenderness and sympathy, are unequalled in the language. At her mother's death Mrs. Carlyle regained possession of the property—worth about £200

a year—which she had made over to Mrs. Welsh some time before her marriage with Carlyle. The other interruption was the composition of *Past and Present*. While visiting the scenes associated with Oliver Cromwell's early life he had been struck by the wretchedness which he saw in the workhouse at St. Ives. His mind had long been filled with indignation at the system of government which did nothing to improve the lot of the unemployed poor, and a copy of the *Chronicle of Joceline of Brakelonde*, published by the Camden Society, coming opportunely into his hands, he laid the *Cromwell* aside for the moment and delivered himself of his views in *Past and Present*. The book was written in the first seven weeks of 1843 and published in April of that year.

Returning to his studies of the Commonwealth period, Carlyle made up his mind, as a preliminary to his book, to make an arrangement of Cromwell's letters and speeches, interspersed with notices of the main historical events of the time. Even this he found to be an arduous labour, for he took immense pains to verify every fact, and his complaints of the toil involved in investigating dull records, and of the stupidities of previous historians, to whom he gave the generic nickname of "Dryasdust," were loud and unceasing. At last it was completed, and Carlyle found that he need do no more. What was intended only as a preliminary draft contained all he wished to say upon the subject. *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations* was published in two volumes in 1845. It met with an enthusiastic reception, and Carlyle's position as one of the greatest and most striking historians of his time was now universally recognised.

About this time there occurred the only misunderstanding between Carlyle and his wife that deserves any serious attention. Carlyle, as we have seen, had become intimate with Lord and Lady Ashburton. He paid them frequent visits, and in December 1845, whilst they were both staying with the Ashburtons at Alverstoke, Mrs. Carlyle became jealous of the influence

that Lady Harriet Ashburton seemed to have upon Carlyle. The attitude was unreasonable, but Mrs. Carlyle and Lady Harriet were not of natures to understand one another, while Carlyle treated the matter as trivial. But Mrs. Carlyle, as we see from some passages in the *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*, felt it keenly. The sore was not completely healed until the death of Lady Harriet Ashburton in 1857.

Though after the publication of *Cromwell* Carlyle's fame had reached its height, he felt that nothing he had to say upon the subjects that lay closest to his heart had any chance of being listened to with attention. His health remained bad, and fits of depression or irritability were common. Believing that no small share of the ills of the day sprang from the facile optimism of the mid-nineteenth century, with its trust in machinery and its habit of applying a materialistic standard to everything, he grew into a habit of exaggerating what he knew must be the unpopular elements in his utterances. In such a mood he wrote his *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question*, denouncing what he called sentimental philanthropy and advocating severe treatment for the negroes. Mill replied in a spirited article, and Carlyle followed up the *Discourse* by eight "Latter-Day Pamphlets," pushing his doctrine to still greater extremes "in a torrent of sulphurous indignation." Their very violence defeated the object of these pamphlets, which no admirer of Carlyle can now read without regret. Their intolerance, their harsh and contemptuous scorn for all who believed that social amelioration was to be sought by humane methods, and their arrogant claim for the supremacy of "the beneficent whip," represent, indeed, one aspect of his teaching, but in a defiant and exaggerated form.

His next work, *The Life of John Sterling*, which appeared in 1851, is a fine tribute to friendship; but the work which was to engage him for the next fourteen years and to be the last published during his lifetime, *The History of Frederick the Great*, is marked throughout by a glorification of force and a disposition to make

success the only test of worth. The composition of *Frederick* was a still greater ordeal than that of *Cromwell*. Again he complained bitterly of the mountains of rubbish he had to dig through, and of the incapability of almost every historian who had preceded him. He had always been sensitive to the slightest noise, and now sought refuge in a sound-proof study built at the top of his Chelsea house. But the gigantic task put such a strain upon his nerves and temper that Mrs. Carlyle complained that living with him was as bad as keeping a lunatic asylum.

The death of his mother in December 1853 was a bereavement from which he never wholly recovered. No son was ever more devoted to his mother, and his letters to her can only be compared to those sent to his "Goody" at Chelsea for the wealth of tenderness and heartfelt affection which they express. He reached her death-bed just in time to hear her last words, and, after following her to the grave, went back to resume his long struggle with *Frederick*. The work progressed slowly and monotonously but steadily. He paid two visits to Germany in order to collect material and to visit Frederick's battle-fields, and the first two volumes appeared in 1858, followed by others in 1862 and 1864, and at last the book was finished in 1865.

With the completion of *Frederick* Carlyle's literary work was done. In 1866 he delivered the Inaugural address as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, having been elected to the Rectorship by the students in opposition to Disraeli, amid a glow of enthusiasm that has seldom surrounded a man of letters. He remained a few days at Edinburgh and thence went for a week's quiet to Scotsbrig, where he was delayed longer than he had intended by a sprained ankle. On April 21st he received a telegram telling him that Mrs. Carlyle was dead. She had gone for a drive in Hyde Park and jumped out of the carriage to help her little dog, who had been run over. The shock was too great for her heart, and when the driver, surprised at receiving no directions, looked into the carriage he found her dead.

Carlyle was heart-broken. He was as "one who hath been stunned," scarcely able to realise his loss. All his life afterwards he hardly ever ceased to brood upon it, accusing himself of neglect and want of consideration. There is much that is morbid in his out-pourings upon the past in the *Reminiscences*, but some of his ejaculations such as "Oh that I had you yet but five minutes beside me, to tell you all!" or "I was rich once, had I known it, very rich; and now, I am become poor unto the end," are among the most pathetic and moving in all literature. The epitaph which he had inscribed over her grave at Haddington runs as follows—

In her bright existence she had more sorrows than are common, but also a soft invincibility, a capacity of discernment, and a noble loyalty of heart which are rare. For forty years she was the true and loving helpmate of her husband, and by act and word unweariedly forwarded him as none else could in all of worthy that he did or attempted. She died at London, 21st April, 1866, suddenly snatched from him, and the light of his life as if gone out.

Though surrounded by many friends, amongst the most devoted of whom were Froude, Tyndall, Lecky, Forster, Ruskin, Dr. Moncure Conway, Tennyson, and Edward FitzGerald, and carefully tended by his niece, the remainder of Carlyle's life was desolate and sad. His rare incursions into public life, such as his advocacy of Governor Eyre, were unfortunate. He gradually lost strength, power to write with his right hand leaving him, his one wish being for rest. Honours came in the shape of the Prussian order "Pour le Mérite" in 1874, an offer from Disraeli of the Grand Cross of the Bath in the same year, and a medal to which nearly every English-speaking contemporary of distinction subscribed, which was presented on his eightieth birthday.

At last the lonely old man entered into the quiet for which he longed. He died on February 4th, 1881. He had desired to be buried at Ecclefechan, and though Dean Stanley offered a tomb in Westminster Abbey he was laid beside his parents in Ecclefechan churchyard, followed to the grave by a few of his closest surviving friends.

## II

## HIS CRITICISM

CARLYLE's work falls naturally into four broad divisions. First of all there is his criticism, under which heading we may include the greater part of the *Miscellanies*, *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, and the biographies of Schiller and Sterling. Next there is *Sartor Resartus*, a book impossible to classify but requiring separate treatment as setting forth the principles that underlie Carlyle's whole philosophy and his most deep-seated beliefs concerning the great problems of life. To the third division belong his utterances upon political and social subjects contained in *Chartism*, *Past and Present*, and the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. Lastly we have the three histories, *The French Revolution*, *Cromwell*, and *Frederick the Great*.

As a critic Carlyle occupies a high place, and had he not early in his career turned aside from literary criticism his rank would be still higher. It is often said that he was blind to many of the finer qualities of literature, and his absurd verdicts upon Wordsworth, Keats, and Lamb, give some support to this view. But notwithstanding the tinge of Puritanism that shows itself in his way of looking at every form of art, the range of Carlyle's critical appreciation is astonishingly wide. Both in the manner and the matter of criticism he has made notable advances. He was a pioneer of the historical method, and it was through Carlyle, even more than through Coleridge, that German mysticism and German transcendentalism entered the English thought of the nineteenth century.

When Carlyle began to write his early essays the dogmatic, "slashing" criticism of Jeffrey and Macaulay held the field. To say this is to say that English criticism had made no perceptible advance since the days of Johnson, for that method, in all its essentials, was Johnson's method. The critic was judge and executioner in one, the author under discussion was

the prisoner at the bar, and the verdict was given according to a code of rules supposed to be founded on the practice of the classical writers. "The standards of poetry," a writer in the first number of the *Edinburgh Review* declared, "have been fixed long ago by certain inspired writers, whose authority it is no longer lawful to call in question." The critic's business was to apply these standards ; and though the application was often successful when the poet was a man of no great originality and content to walk along the beaten road, it commonly broke down when he was a revealer of fresh truth and fresh beauty, when, in short, a new genius appeared above the horizon. The old procedure has furnished us with some useful judgments and a great many entertaining pages, but in passing into a higher realm and occupying itself with a different set of problems, criticism became an instrument of immeasurably greater range and power.

The three men to whom credit for this transformation belongs are Coleridge, De Quincey, and Carlyle, and all three got their inspiration from German sources. Coleridge is one of the great names in the whole history of criticism, and the revolution of English critical methods is often traced to him alone. But a large share of the honour must be attributed to Carlyle. He reached his conclusions independently ; he expressed them with greater definiteness ; and he applied them with equal force and to a far wider range of subjects. That there is a close bond between the poetry of a nation and its history, that it is necessary to study a country's whole literature from the earliest period down to the present day if we are to understand the full significance of any part of it, that matter is of equal importance with form, and that "it is the essence of the poet to be new," to enlarge our capacity for feeling by showing us something in a way that we have never seen it before—all this, which lies at the root of the criticism of to-day, was enunciated in clear terms by Carlyle at a time when it came with the freshness and inspiration of a newly revealed truth.

The two great underlying principles of his criticism are his application of historical ideas to literature, and his insistence that a critical judgment is worthless unless there is some measure of sympathy between the critic and the author of whom he treats. How much the second of these principles involves and how greatly it differs from the tone of Jeffrey and of the *Edinburgh Review* may be judged from a passage in an essay on Goethe written as early as 1828. After maintaining that Goethe stands, "not like a culprit to plead for himself before the literary *plebeians*, but like a high teacher and preacher, standing for truth, to whom both *plebeians* and *patricians* were bound to give ear," he concludes as follows—

"The faults of a poem, or other piece of art, as we view them at first, will by no means continue unaltered when we view them after due and final investigation. Let us consider what we mean by a fault. By the word fault we designate something that displeases us, that contradicts us. But here the question might arise: Who are *we*? This fault displeases, contradicts *us*; so far is clear; and had *we*, had *I*, and *my* pleasure and confirmation been the chief end of the poet, then doubtless he has failed in that end, and his fault remains a fault irremediably, and without defence. . . . To see rightly into this matter, and to determine with any infallibility, whether what we call a fault *is* in very deed a fault, we must previously have settled two points, neither of which may be so readily settled. First, we must have made plain to ourselves what the poet's aim really and truly was, how the task he had to do stood before his own eyes, and how far, with such means as it afforded him, he has fulfilled it. Secondly, we must have decided whether and how far this aim, this task of his, accorded,—not with *us*, and our individual crotchetts, and the crotchetts of our little senate where we give or take the law,—but with human nature, and the nature of things at large; with the universal principles of poetic beauty, not as they stand written in our text-books, but in the hearts and imaginations of all men. Does the answer in either case come out unfavourable; was there an inconsistency between the means and the end, a discordance between the end and truth, there is a fault; was there not there is no fault.

"Thus it would appear that the detection of faults, provided they be faults of any depth and consequence, leads us of itself into that region where also the higher beauties of the piece, if it have any true beauties, essentially reside. In

fact, according to our view, no man can pronounce dogmatically, with even a chance of being right, on the faults of a poem, till he has seen its very last and highest beauty; the last in becoming visible to any one, which few even look after, which indeed in most pieces it were very vain to look after; the beauty of a poem as a Whole, in the strict sense; the clear view of it as an indivisible Unity; and whether it has grown up naturally from the general soil of Thought, and stands there like a thousand-years' Oak, no leaf, no bough superfluous; or is nothing but a paste-board Tree, cobbled together out of size and waste-paper and water-colours; altogether unconnected with the soil of Thought, except by mere juxtaposition, or at best united with it by some decayed *stump* and *dead boughs*, which the more cunning Decorationist (as in your *Historic Novel*) may have selected for the basis and support of his agglutinations.”<sup>1</sup>

Here we have it laid down clearly and firmly that poetry must be based upon the fundamental realities of “human nature and the nature of things at large,” while at the same time the fullest liberty is given to the poet to pierce through to those realities in his own special way. The critic must first attain a sympathetic understanding of the poet’s aim, and then judge of his achievement without regard to any preconceived theories, equal stress being laid upon the fitness of the means employed and the nature of poetic beauty as written “in the hearts and imaginations of all men.” This latter is a point of some importance. Carlyle has exalted individual merit so often and in such terms, that we run some risk of forgetting that he also recognised the laws governing all achievement against which the most brilliant genius may dash itself in vain.

From his other great principle he drew results of equal value. He had a keen sense of the unity of history, and promptly saw that literature is also one; a single though variegated record of the spiritual progress of mankind. Here, too, he differs from most of the critics who preceded him, and strikes out a new path. Instead of confining his examination to the outward form of a work of art, its beauty of presentation, its logical coherence and regularity, he is never

<sup>1</sup> *Miscellanies*, People’s Edition, Vol. I, pp. 219-20.

satisfied until he reaches the inner idea. Unless he can discover "some kind of gospel-tidings burning until it be uttered," he is contemptuous of any beauty of artistic form. Adopting Fichte's theory, he regarded literary men as interpreters of the "divine idea" of which the visible universe is but "the symbol and manifestation, having in itself no meaning, or even true existence independent of it." He accordingly looked to literature for strength and sustenance rather than for a heightened pleasure in seeing the outward world, for moral profundity rather than for natural magic. This preference for matter to form sprang from Carlyle's innate Puritanism, and when carried, as it often was, to undue lengths, it had an injurious effect upon his critical judgments. He never really appreciated that large mass of writings whose sole end is amusement, and which if it has not helped us "to endure life" has done much to enable us "to enjoy it." It led him in later years to speak derisively of literature in general and to turn aside from all purely literary criticism. But, though held by Carlyle in an exaggerated form, the view that a literary work cannot be judged by its style apart from its content has proved an influence of the most fruitful kind. It found literary history concerned for the most part with questions of philosophical, grammatical, or rhetorical interest; it has made it what M. Brunetière calls "the history of humanism," a history of man's intellectual development. "Criticism," says another distinguished Frenchman, M. Anatole France, "is the latest in date of all literary forms, and will perhaps end by absorbing all the others." It would be impossible to say this of criticism as it was understood by Johnson or by Jeffrey; it may be said with justice of criticism as it was understood by Carlyle.

When we turn from Carlyle's theory to his practice we find a body of criticism, dealing with a wide and varied range of subjects, and marked by a breadth of knowledge, an insight, and a penetration that place him in the front rank of English critics. At a time when, as

Professor Caird puts it, "it would scarcely be too much to say that then this country was still outside of the main stream of European culture," Carlyle discerned "the significance of the great revival of German literature and the enormous reinforcement which its poetic and philosophic idealism had brought to the failing faith of man." "Carlyle," said Goethe, "is more at home in our literature than we are ourselves," and his essays on the great German teachers, on Goethe, Richter, Novalis, and Schiller, on German Poetry, and on the *Niebelungen Lied* were a revelation to his contemporaries, while there is little in his estimates that has been superseded by later research. The confidence and ease with which he handles a subject so obscure and intricate as German literature then was are truly marvellous. And his accounts of the great eighteenth-century Frenchmen such as Voltaire, Mirabeau, Diderot, and Rousseau are hardly, if at all, inferior to his treatment of the Germans. Mirabeau was one of his favourite heroes to whom he does full justice, and though, as Dr Garnett says, spiritual power could not present itself in a form less attractive to him than that of Voltaire, the arch-scoffer, "the essay in a measure supersedes all others on Voltaire. The outward circumstances of his life and his personal relations to others may still be profitably investigated; Voltaire the writer may still repay minute criticism; but Voltaire the man can hardly be better known."

Of his essays on English literature, that on Scott is the least satisfactory. The *Waverley Novels* belong to the literature of amusement, and Carlyle fails to see their real merits. But even here his criticisms are neither spleenetic nor rash; if one-sided they are, at the least, intelligible, and several later critics of distinction have upheld them. The most patriotic Scotsman will, however, pardon his low estimate of Scott in return for the magnificent eulogy of Burns. The *Essay on Burns* is almost beyond praise. It is filled with a burning enthusiasm yet discriminating in its praise, piercing to the very heart of the matter yet giving a

portrait of Burns the peasant and all his surroundings—in every possible respect a masterpiece among English critical utterances. All succeeding writers upon Burns have done little more than repeat what had been so admirably said by Carlyle. To a lower though still a high rank belong the essays on Boswell and Johnson. Any one who wishes to realise the difference between Macaulay's brilliant but flashy talent and Carlyle's genius could not do better than read these two essays and then Macaulay's essay on Johnson at a single sitting. In delicate perception of character, in sympathy and tolerance of view, in care and patience to reach a just estimate, in every quality that a critic should possess, Carlyle is immeasurably superior to Macaulay. Had Carlyle written nothing more than the essays mentioned in this brief sketch his place as one of our foremost critics would be assured. Matthew Arnold's purely literary criticism is of smaller bulk and the fruit of a greater concentration of effort, but there is none of Arnold's essays which must not yield to that of Carlyle on Burns.<sup>1</sup>

## III

## SARTOR RESARTUS

“IT is a work of genius, dear,” said Mrs. Carlyle to her husband when she finished reading the manuscript of *Sartor Resartus*, and the world has endorsed her verdict. Lord Morley declares that some of the most generous spirits of his time and place, when discontented with the actual and yearning for an undefined ideal, have found the beginning of consolation in its pages. Lecky pronounced it to be one of the most influential and popular books published in the second half of the last century. Mr. Frederic Harrison calls it “the most

<sup>1</sup> For an admirable discussion of Carlyle's influence upon English criticism the reader is referred to the Introduction to *English Literary Criticism*, by Professor Vaughan. Blackie. 1906.

original, the most characteristic, the deepest, and the most lyrical of his productions ;" while Mr. Birrell confesses that some passages in it have long appeared to him "to be the sublimest poetry of the age." There are books which, appealing to the logical understanding, present their conclusions with a force and persuasiveness irresistible to certain minds. Such are the writings of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, and multitudes have found that the reading of them marked a new epoch in their lives. There are other books which appeal to a different range of faculties. By a dogmatic statement of what their writers claim to have learned from direct intuition of the meaning of life and the universe, they kindle the imagination and have a bracing effect upon the will and the emotions. Those to whom they appeal feel that from their perusal they have by a flash of illumination gained some insight into the meaning of existence, that they are at one with the mysterious forces that move the world. To this latter class belong all the writings of Carlyle, and more especially *Sartor Resartus*. It was the culmination of his earlier mental history ; it expresses the most general principles of his philosophy ; and it contains in germ most of the ideas which he subsequently applied to the political and social problems of his age.

When Carlyle retired to the solitude of Craigenputtock there were two tendencies in the thought of the time by which every thinking man was bound to be affected. On the one hand there was the *maladie du siècle* which had entered every form of European thought. Whether we find it in *Werther* or in Byronism, in Chateaubriand's *René*, or Sénancour's *Oberman*, or Sainte-Beuve's *Volupté*, it is essentially the same—a mood of disillusion and despondency, a regret for vanished faiths, finding expression in egoistic complaint, and paralysing the springs of action. On the other hand many of the best English spirits had turned to Benthamism, which, as Carlyle understood it, was but "a profit-and-loss philosophy," a mere mechanical view of the universe, judging everything by material standards

and so intent upon improving the "body-politic" that it had forgotten the existence of a "soul-politic." *Sartor Resartus* describes his deliverance from both these attitudes and the way in which he fought his way through appearances and formulas to a spiritual interpretation of the universe. Carlyle represents the way in which this deliverance was brought as typical of his age. Every earnest soul who faces the problems of life must, he indicates, pass through some similar experience before he reaches a serene outlook.

In form the work is the biography of an imaginary German professor, Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, who is supposed to have written a treatise on *The Philosophy of Clothes* of which Carlyle appears as editor. The idea was suggested by a passage in the *Tale of a Tub* where Swift speaks of a sect who "held the universe to be a large suit of clothes, which invests everything." The loose structure of the book lends itself admirably to Carlyle's purpose. He is able, as he wills, to change from gravity to humour and from humour to pathos, while opinions which would have an air of extravagance if put forward by Carlyle himself could easily be attributed to his eccentric German professor. After a preliminary account of the clothes-philosophy, full of humour and poetic beauty, the book goes on, in a series of delicate etchings, to describe Teufelsdröckh's early years. Teufelsdröckh (the name is but a thin disguise for Carlyle himself) had learned from his mother "her own simple version of the Christian faith." This soon falls from him, but he can find nothing to replace it. Though his whole being revolts against the blank scepticism in which he finds himself, there seems no escape, and he is confronted by the "Everlasting No." This famous phrase is often taken to mean the hero's "protest," but it really stands for the sum of facts which seem to deny the existence of a moral order in the universe. The Everlasting No which "pealed authoritatively through all the recesses" of Teufelsdröckh's being was all that can be said against belief in divine or human justice, freedom, or eternal purpose. It was the new knowledge which

always confronts inherited belief, and the "protest" was his reply to this Everlasting No. "The Everlasting No had said : 'Behold, thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's) : ' to which my whole Me now made answer : 'I am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee !'" The power by which Teufelsdröckh was able to make this protest came from a "Spiritual New-birth or Baphometic Fire-Baptism," the scene of which was Rue St. Thomas de l'Enfer (Leith Walk, Edinburgh). This notable incident, so similar in its nature to what many of the great mystics have experienced, seems to have been a sudden awakening to the conviction that the material world is in its deepest sense but a symbol of the spiritual. "It was," says Professor Nichol, "in no sense a conversion to any belief in person or creed, it was but the assertion of a strong manhood against an almost suicidal mood of despair." However this may be, the feeling enabled Teufelsdröckh to shake "base Fear away ;" the temper of his misery was changed : "not Fear or whining sorrow was in it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance."

Having answered the Everlasting No, Teufelsdröckh passes to the Centre of Indifference when he loses sight of his own misery in contemplating the nothingness of life and the fate of the whole human race. He had now performed the "preliminary moral act—annihilation of self" which led to the Everlasting Yea, the doctrine that serenity can be reached only through self-renunciation and work. "Love not Pleasure ; love God. This is the EVERLASTING YEA, wherein all contradiction is solved."

If we try to disentangle two or three of the leading thoughts that run through Carlyle's philosophy we shall find that they are really very simple and easy to apprehend. The main lesson he wishes to teach is that behind all the appearances of life there is, for those who will penetrate to it, a manifestation of a spiritual principle, and that all which we see is but the outer garment, the emblems or symbols of that principle. R. H. Hutton quotes as the central thought of Carlyle's life, this pas-

sage from *Sartor Resartus* : "What is man himself but a symbol of God? Is not all that he does symbolical,—a revelation to sense of the mystic God-given power that is in him, a gospel of freedom, which he, the 'Messias of Nature,' preaches, as he can, by act and word? Not a hut he builds but is the visible embodiment of a thought, but leaves visible record of invisible things, but is, in the transcendental sense, symbolical as well as real." By the *veracity* which Carlyle is always demanding he meant a determination to pierce through all external veils and coverings to this reality.

His sense of the sacredness of work, too, has now become a commonplace, though it should be remembered that if the view has always been held, Carlyle was the first to give it adequate expression. In proportion as a writer has made his influence felt and his thought has permeated the structure of society it is difficult for the generation that succeeds him to appreciate his originality. This is the case with Carlyle. His earnest appeals to men to transform their ideals of duty, work, effort, into actual practice rang like a trumpet in the ears of the best of his contemporaries. "*Do the Duty which lies nearest thee*, which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second Duty will already become clearer." "The Situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal: work it out therefrom, and working, believe, live, be free." These and similar passages such as the magnificent one describing the two sorts of workmen, are truisms for an age which glories in the strenuous life, but they once had the added force of novelty.

Carlyle's wonderful blend of humour and imagination is perhaps seen at its best in *Sartor Resartus*. The book is grotesque both in execution and in style. It lacks order and arrangement; its diction is mannered and often barbarous; and its meaning cannot be gathered without considerable effort on the part of the reader. But the beauty of many passages, its emotional intensity

and power of imagination, as well as the noble passion that inspires it, make it one of the most memorable and impressive prose writings of the nineteenth century.

## IV

## POLITICAL AND SOCIAL TEACHING

It is impossible to bring Carlyle's political and social teaching into any coherent system. The political problem as he stated it was: "How in conjunction with inevitable Democracy indispensable Sovereignty is to exist?" And he seems to throw his whole weight now into the one scale and now into the other. Probably no great man had less sympathy with liberty as the word is understood to-day, or was more scornful in his attitude to those who wished to enlarge its scope. "Liberty, I am told, is a divine thing. Liberty, when it becomes the 'Liberty to die by starvation,' is not so divine." "The notion that a man's liberty consists in giving his vote at the election-hustings, and saying, 'Behold, now I too have my twenty-thousandth part of a Talker in our National Palaver; will not all the gods be good to me?'—is one of the pleasantest." "If of ten men nine are recognisable as fools, which is a common calculation, how in the name of wonder will you ever get a ballot-box to grind you out wisdom from the votes of these ten men? Only by reducing to zero nine of these votes can wisdom ever issue from your ten. The mass of men consulted at the hustings upon any high matter whatsoever is as ugly an exhibition of human stupidity as this world sees." "Democracy is forever impossible! The Universe is a monarchy and a hierarchy, the noble in the high places, the ignoble in the low; this is in all times and in all places the Almighty Maker's law." These are typical utterances, but they may be paralleled by equally vehement denunciations of idle aristocracies intent only on protecting their privileges and escaping all real duties, while many of his

phrases such as "A fair day's wages for a fair day's work," "Permanence of employment," "Chivalry of labour," and "Justice before Charity," have become the watchwords of the democracy. Again, Professor Muirhead is undoubtedly right in claiming that if there is any single name more than another that represents the ideas for which our new imperialism stands, it is Carlyle's; but it may be claimed with equal justice that no man of his time was more insistent on the duty of government applying itself first of all to remedying the evils that caused such appalling misery among the poorer classes at home. Further, he carried his individualism to the most extravagant lengths, yet his great doctrine of the "Organisation of Labour" is almost at one with the views of modern socialism.

Perhaps the nearest approach to an explanation of these inconsistencies may be found in an examination of his doctrine of Hero-worship, and the closely associated, indeed almost complementary doctrine, that "might is right." Holding that the history of the world is the biography of its greatest men, he traced all human progress to the initiative and guidance of "the representative men," the "men of light and leading," "mortals superior in power, courage, or understanding" who, whether as chiefs, kings, captains, or priests, had grasped the reins of government and enforced their will upon those around them. Of the view that the undistinguished masses ought to be trusted to solve the problems of their own welfare or that they have a right to enforce their collective will upon their leaders, even when this right is attended with a full sense of responsibility, he was always bitterly contemptuous. "Find in any country the Ablest Man that exists there; raise *him* to the supreme place, and loyally reverence him: you have a perfect government for that country; no ballot-box, parliamentary eloquence, voting, constitution building, or other machinery whatsoever, can improve it." The great majority of mankind are like children who must be ordered and disciplined for their own welfare, if necessary even in the sternest manner, by the few

gifted with wisdom and strength. Loyalty and discipleship are the virtues which most of us need to practise ; we must trust our strong man even if we think that he is leading us wrong, since to forsake him is the road to inevitable anarchy and confusion. Past ages have managed to get their great men into positions of command, not, it is true, without struggle, and in a rough and cumbrous manner, but they have succeeded. How to do the same is the problem that faces "inevitable Democracy," the new force that has begun to make itself felt. "That we all reverence 'great men' is to me the living rock amid all rushings down whatsoever. All that democracy ever meant lies there, the attainment of a true Aristocracy or Government of the Best. Make search for the Able man. How to get him is the question of questions."

No answer to this question that can be used as a guide for political action has been given by Carlyle. For popular election as we have seen, he has the greatest contempt. Hereditary aristocracies think only of their privileges and have abdicated their function of providing rulers willing to spend themselves for the general good. Besides, how are we to discern the genuine Hero from amidst the mass of Quacks, Incarnate Solecisms, Gilt Mountebanks, and Esurient Phantasms who thrust themselves upon us? The only logical conclusion, on Carlyle's principles, seems to be that we ought to place ourselves in the hands of any man who arises with great determination and force of character, and trust that he may prove a Heaven-inspired leader.

But in looking back upon the past and deciding who were the real heroes and who the shams, Carlyle applies his other maxim that "Might is Right." The only right that men can claim is the right to be governed justly. Rights are everywhere "correctly articulated mighty." "Strength we may say is Justice itself." He has set forth this view so often, so emphatically, and with so little qualification, that there is a danger of it being interpreted to mean that success is the only test of worth. It is true he would not have denied it even

put in this form ; success, he would have said, *is* the test of worth, but only because nothing that is worthless can, in the long run, succeed. "Nature is a just umpire." "Give a thing time ; if it can succeed it is a right thing." The fundamental quality which he sees in all his heroes is veracity, their harmony with essential fact. And where this quality is present there can be no failure. He has made it plain that by strength he does not mean mere material force, but in practice we often find him justifying the most brutal applications of violence by saying that it was exerted on the side of right. His Calvinism and his unqualified admiration for order are here at one. Hence his advocacy of slavery and the "beneficent whip," his defence of Governor Eyre's severity in crushing the Jamaica rising, and his outburst of indignation in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* at any attempt to deal with the criminal classes upon humane lines. The truth with regard to the maxim "Might is Right" is that everything lies in its application. Carlyle never sufficiently allowed for the fact that although the power to rule may spring from a right to rule, the right may pass away while the power still remains. And its use as a test of worth needs to be guarded with equal care. Suppose the Pagan persecutions had been relentless enough, and Christianity had been completely wiped out, or suppose the Southern States had conquered and slavery had been continued, would it have been a proof that Christianity was an evil and slavery a worthy institution? Is anything that seems to be succeeding therefore right? Carlyle would answer that the supposition is an impossible one, that "Nature is a just umpire," and it is only the truth that succeeds if we "give it time." This is a fundamental principle of his philosophy, and it is here that Lord Morley sees the kernel of all that is most retrograde in his teaching.

"He identifies the physical with the moral order, confounds faithful conformity to the material conditions of success, with loyal adherence to virtuous rule and principle, and then appeals to material triumph as the sanctification of nature and the ratification of high heaven. Admiring with profoundest

admiration the spectacle of an inflexible will, when armed with a long-headed insight into means and quantities and forces as its instrument, and yet deeply revering the abstract idea of justice ; dazzled by the methods and the products of iron resolution, yet imbued with the traditional affection for virtue ; he has seen no better way of conciliating both inclinations than by insisting that they point in the same direction, and that virtue and success, justice and victory, merit and triumph, are in the long run all one and the same thing. The most fatal of confusions. Compliance with material law and condition ensures material victory, and compliance with moral condition ensures moral triumph ; but then moral triumph is as often as not physical martyrdom. Superior military virtues must unquestionably win the verdict of Fate, Nature, Fact, and Veracity on the battle-field, but what then ? Has Fate no other verdicts to record than these ? and at the moment while she writes Nature down debtor to the conqueror, may she not also have written her down his implacable debtor for the moral cost of his conquest ?" <sup>1</sup>

We may admit the force of much of this criticism and yet bear in mind that Carlyle would have said that the "superior military conditions" are themselves the outcome of superior spiritual conditions, and that, if not, though they may triumph for a time they will in turn be conquered by right when "right is ready." We are all ready to believe in the ultimate success of good causes and the reason why we deny that the goodness of a cause is to be judged from its success is that we cannot be sure that the battle is yet over. Right may be defeated again and again, but in the final arbitrament, whenever that may be, it will be found to have won. At least this was the optimistic conclusion of Carlyle and the real meaning of his identification of the physical with the moral order.

From one point of view the great flaw in Carlyle's political philosophy was his failure to understand the organic unity of the human race. This was first pointed out by Mazzini in an essay published in 1843, and the failure grew more complete instead of diminishing with time. His sympathy was given to the separate life of each man and not to men in their collective life. He never realised the nature of the forces by which men act

<sup>1</sup> *Miscellanies*, Vol. I, p. 169.

and react upon each other, and which can be seen, not by regarding them as isolated individuals, but by looking at them as possessing a collective as well as an individual activity. This lay at the root of his Absolutism. He could not see what a great current of national vitality may be set up by a people free to govern themselves by their own collective will, or if he saw it, he disregarded it in his admiration for the chosen leaders who were after all but the expression of that national will. This admiration for inspired men overwhelmed his belief in the inspiration of humanity, and led him to think that provided a people went the right road it mattered little whether they were driven or whether they chose it for themselves.

It would, however, be a one-sided representation of Carlyle's political and social views which omitted to take notice of his powerful and continued pleading on behalf of the working classes. It was he who made the "Condition of England question" the question of the day, and his strictures upon idle aristocracies sank deeply into the public mind and gave currency to the conviction that social advantages involve social duties, and that those who have inherited wealth and power are called upon to do something to justify their position. By a strange irony this fierce opponent of democracy has spoken the words and kindled the emotions which provide democracy with its most powerful weapons. Indeed the strangeness of Carlyle is that he has furnished weapons for so many sects and so many parties. He was critical rather than constructive. He had no belief in the efficacy of mere institutions whatever their nature, and if his criticisms are often inconsistent, his inconsistencies are always lit up by flashes of genius. We may say that his chief contribution to political thought was the vigour of his demonstration that man lives by spiritual as well as material things, and that civilisation is not a piece of mechanism grinding out results of itself, but is dependent on the energy and will and devotion which men put into it.

## V

## HISTORICAL WORKS

ONE of the most learned of modern historians has passed severe judgment upon Carlyle's historical work. "Excepting Froude," wrote Lord Acton, "I think him (Carlyle) the most detestable of historians. The doctrine of heroes, the doctrine that will is above law, comes next in atrocity to the doctrine that the flag covers the goods, that the cause justifies its agents, which is what Froude stands for. Carlyle's robust mental independence is not the same thing as originality."<sup>1</sup> This is in large part a moral judgment and is directed against the teaching which Carlyle wished his history to convey. Judged as an artist in history, his greatness cannot be disputed. No English historian has equalled him in the vivid dramatic power with which he realises an action or a group and places it before us. The penetrative imagination which enables him to enter into the heart of an historical character and the poetic imagination with which he shapes and renders it have often caused him to be likened to Shakspere. It is certain that no one but Shakspere possessed this gift in a greater degree. He gives no consecutive and ordered narrative, but draws a number of selected scenes with a force and colour that make us feel that we have seen them with our own eyes. The modern view that history is a science and the historian an impassive chronicler of facts who must neither acquit nor condemn, finds no support in Carlyle. On the contrary, he charges his pages with his own passionate emotion so that the reader is compelled to take one side or the other. He admires or detests, applauds or blames as Carlyle directs. Further, he has a rich and refreshing vein of humour which relieves the gravity of his style and enables him to

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Lord Acton to Mary Gladstone*. Edited by Herbert Paul. p. 70.

bring out the significance of details which other historians pass over without mention.

These gifts would have made him a great man of letters. They might have failed to make him a great historian had he not possessed two other qualities—untiring industry in the collection of his materials and a faithful regard for accuracy in their use. Carlyle's industry was amazing. He spared himself no drudgery in the effort to find out the truth about the most minute details. No possible source of information was neglected, and Carlyle could have said with quite as much truth as Macaulay that he had often read many volumes in order to write a single paragraph. The accuracy of his knowledge has been vouched for by nearly every historian who has followed him. For years his *History of Frederick the Great* was used in German military schools as an authority on the campaigns of Frederick, and the most recent German students of the period have found little to correct or to alter. Dr. Holland Rose, one of the foremost living authorities on the French Revolution, says that if a good deal in Carlyle's *History* needs qualification, "when we remember how comparatively scanty were the materials at his command up to 1837, the wonder is that so large a part of his narrative will bear the searchlight of modern investigation." Gibbon, Carlyle, and Macaulay are the three English historians who seem least likely to be superseded. Their works, as Professor Grant puts it, are the only historical writings in English to which scholars have been content to add additional information in footnotes and appendices without re-writing the whole story.

*The History of the French Revolution* is the most popular and in many ways the best of Carlyle's histories. The period was the most momentous in modern history and he was deeply penetrated with its spirit. What Carlyle always held to be the most fundamental truths found concrete expression in that great upheaval, and he paints the bewilderment and chaos to which centuries of misgovernment, idleness, and weakness had led, with the vividness and poetic feeling of which he was a

master. The book is unique in English literature. Humour, pathos, dramatic imagination, and the sense of pity and terror are at their highest. Other writers have produced better accounts of the externals of the Revolution, with fewer gaps in the narrative, and a few have exhibited more sense of proportion in their treatment of facts, but no one has shown us its soul like Carlyle. We may find fault with his vehemence, and hold that the abuses of the old *régime* were less monstrous, the aristocracy less blinded and selfish, and the people less miserable than he makes out, but as we look at the great catastrophe in "the light of conflagration" with which he floods it we become convinced that no one has better delineated its essential features. Many of the famous scenes in the book—the taking of the Bastille, the flight to Varennes, the death of Mirabeau, and the execution of the king—as well as his portraits of Marie Antoinette, of Camille Desmoulins, of Danton, and of Charlotte Corday, are among the finest and most memorable passages in all historical literature. It lies open in some degree to Lord Acton's stricture about "the doctrine of heroes," for Carlyle thought history to be "the essence of innumerable biographies," and even when dealing with this tremendous upheaval of the masses he gives most of his space to and lays greatest stress upon their leaders.

In the Revolution Carlyle saw the last act of a gigantic drama in which the old Feudalism and the new Democracy were at death-grips. He forced men to realise what this contest meant, and the fear of the destructive power of democracy, when once it is stirred to action, which has since permeated English thought, was in very large measure due to his *History*.

No other book has done so much to reverse a traditional estimate as *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*. Before it was published the current view of Cromwell was that he was a hypocritical tyrant whose only merit was his courage. By his editing of Cromwell's own speeches and letters Carlyle dispelled that view, though it may still be doubted whether

Cromwell's rule was quite as perfect as his inspired editor would have us believe. Despotism was a small evil in Carlyle's eyes, and that later historians have shown Cromwell's rule to have been a practical despotism would have seemed to him of no account. Cromwell's severity in Ireland, also, he easily justifies on the ground that such measures were necessary if the right side was to win. The main thing that wins his admiration is that Cromwell had in some degree his own favourite virtue of veracity—sincerity both towards himself and towards others. Carlyle makes no attempt to weigh Cromwell's character in any delicate critical balance. None the less the book has been a notable contribution to English history. The documents have been edited with scrupulous care, and the elucidations show the wonderful historical imagination and the eloquence which never seem to have deserted Carlyle.

His third great history provoked more criticism than did either of its predecessors. "The doctrine of heroes, the doctrine that will is above law" is preached in *The Life of Frederick the Great* in its most unguarded form. One feels that Carlyle's extravagance is to some extent due to his doubt as to whether Frederick is really quite the hero he would wish him. Frederick was "veracious" in the Carlylean sense. He was clear, direct, and resolute, and in contrast with the meanness of his age he may be described as heroic. But his bad qualities, his tyranny, his selfishness, and his faithlessness, show up clearly the weakness of the doctrine of hero-worship. Carlyle seems to have been overwhelmed by the size and complexity of his task, which was nothing less than a history of Europe during the greater part of the eighteenth century. But every page in the book bears the unmistakable stamp of genius. Frederick's battles are described with the most graphic force and in full detail, yet the details are chosen with an art that prevents anything like tedium. The whole eighteenth century seems to pass in procession before us and is lit up by humour, sarcasm, and eloquence. The great

defect of the work is that Carlyle is anxious to find palliation even for Frederick's greatest crimes and to make him appear a high-minded man and a just ruler. Not even Carlyle's genius could do this, and he seems to feel its impossibility. He carries his usual violence of language to absurd lengths, as if being unable to produce conviction he would at least quell his readers into silent acquiescence with his views.

As a monument of laborious industry *The Life of Frederick the Great* is beyond praise. It also shows Carlyle's humour at its richest and his power of description in its most brilliant form. But it is the least successful of his three historical works. It has less vigour and spontaneity than the others, lacks in a still greater degree the sense of form, and gives a freer rein to prejudice. Carlyle was now an old man, and the book is not free from some of the faults of age—intolerance, impatience, a tendency to repetition, and an inclination to mistake violent assertion for argument. Nevertheless it is a great achievement. A work of such vast scope is hardly likely to be undertaken again by any one author.

## VI

## STYLE

WHEN speaking of Irving's style, which was modelled on that of the English Puritan writers, Carlyle says, "to his example also I suppose I owe something of my own poor affectations in that matter which are now more or less visible to me, much repented of or not." The sentence gives some support to the view that his mannerisms, the "nodosities and angularities" of his style, were the fruit of conscious endeavour. There is certainly a world of difference between the balanced and periodic structure of the sentences to be found in *The Life of Schiller* and in the earliest essays and the rugged force

of all his later work. The common explanation is that the change was brought about by his imitation of the Germans. Lowell says that "the marked influence of Jean Paul upon Carlyle is undeniable," both in matter and manner. He sees the "humour of Swift and Sterne and Fielding, after filtering through Richter, reappear in Carlyle with a tinge of Germanism that makes it novel, alien, or even displeasing to the English mind." But the German influence may be easily exaggerated, and if we read the chapter on his father in the *Reminiscences* or look through the early letters we see the force of Froude's contention that his style "had its origin in his father's house in Annandale." What we name as Carlylese was the natural mould in which his thoughts ran, and in *The Life of Schiller* he used what was for him an artificial dialect.

The prose of the eighteenth century, of Swift, of Addison and of Goldsmith, is by general consent the classical English prose. Its qualities are the qualities which we admire in Pope's poetry—clearness, force, ease, and balance. Its tradition has been maintained in the nineteenth century by Matthew Arnold and Newman, and in our own day by Mr. Lowes Dickinson. The romantic prose of Carlyle, De Quincey, and Ruskin aims at a different sort of excellence. It has more colour and ornament, assumes many of the characteristics of poetry, is more charged with emotion, more varied in its rhythm. It is addressed to the ear rather than to the eye, to the feelings rather than to the understanding, and is in every respect more oratorical than the prose of the preceding age. Of this latter prose Carlyle is one of the greatest masters. He gains his effects by kindling his own strong feeling in his readers' minds rather than by any train of argument. And in doing this he shows a wonderful command of all the resources of language. The wealth of his vocabulary is second only to that of Shakspere. Words from the most varied sources, strange or common, dignified or the reverse, come readily to his pen, and when he fails to find the precise word suited to his purpose he does

not hesitate to coin a new one. This, indeed, is one of the vices of his style. He strains after emphasis, and, rejecting everything whose sharpness has been worn down by use, his search for an original and striking phrase leads him into a positive distortion of language. He sacrifices everything to force. His sentences in their studied ruggedness of manner seem to have been constructed without any regard for recognised models or even for the rules of grammar. He gives himself the utmost freedom in his use of abrupt transitions, apostrophes, exclamations, rhetorical questions, and allusions. But all these devices have a powerful cumulative effect. His abrupt transitions correspond to the abruptness of his thought, and his irregularly constructed sentences are admirably adapted for conveying his sense of the confusion and disorder of modern life.

If command of metaphor be a sign of genius we cannot deny the very highest place to Carlyle. The wealth of figurative language and the mass of similes and metaphors which he employs are some of the most obvious characteristics of his style. His obscurity is due to this rather than to any want of clearness in forming his sentences. They are lawless, but if we can grasp his allusions they are perfectly clear. The wealth of these allusions, for which he seems to draw at will upon all history and all literature, is only equalled by the profusion of his imagery. He had the imagination and the observant eye of a poet, and the grand operations of nature, the processes of science, and the great pageants of history, are all pressed into his service and illuminate his pages. His faculty of vision was that of a born artist. "Nothing seems hid from those wonderful eyes of yours ;" Emerson wrote to him, "those devouring eyes ; those thirsty eyes ; those portrait-eating, portrait-painting eyes of thine." He saw intensely, and his power of description enabled him to write down what he saw in a way that makes his readers share his vision. This, and his deep-seated dramatic tendency, make his descriptions of great historical scenes so wonderfully vivid. We see them as if they were present before us,

while Carlyle's passionate comments appear like the cries of an excited by-stander.

His humour is another of the leading qualities of his style. It is deeper than Sterne's, more kindly than Swift's, and more grotesque than Lamb's though with a like under-current of pathos. It can be quiet or boisterous, terribly tragic or playfully jocular, but in one form or another it interpenetrates almost everything that he wrote. Though often cynical he is never misanthropic. His keenest shafts come from his feeling of the chasm between the grandeur of the forces that animate the universe and the petty activities of which most men think so much. In some respects akin with Rabelais, in others with the great Germans whom he admired, Carlyle is a humourist of the broad human sort who laughs at man's littleness and affectation but never at man himself.

Perhaps the best criticism of Carlyle's style is that of R. H. Hutton. "He had the temperament and the powers of a great artist, with what was in effect a single aspiration for his art, and that, one which required so great a revolution in the use of appropriate artistic materials, that the first impression he produced on ordinary minds was that of bewilderment and even confusion. . . . He was always trying to paint the light shining in the darkness and the darkness comprehending it not, and therefore it was that he strove so hard to invent a new sort of style which should express not simply the amount of human knowledge, but also, so far as possible, the much vaster amount of human ignorance against which that knowledge sparkled in mere radiant points breaking the gloom. . . . It seems to me a style invented for the purpose of convincing those whom it charmed, that moral truth can only be discerned by a brilliant imaginative tact and audacity in discriminating the various stars sprinkled in a great vault of mystery, and then walking boldly into the doubtful light they give; that there is much which cannot be believed except by self-deceivers or fools, but that wonder is of the essence of all right-mindedness;

that the enigmatic character of life is good for us, so long as we are stern and almost hard in acting on the little truth we can know ; that any sort of clear solution of the enigma must be false, and that any attempt to mitigate the sternness of life must be ascribed to radical weakness and the smooth self-delusions to which the weak are liable.”<sup>1</sup>

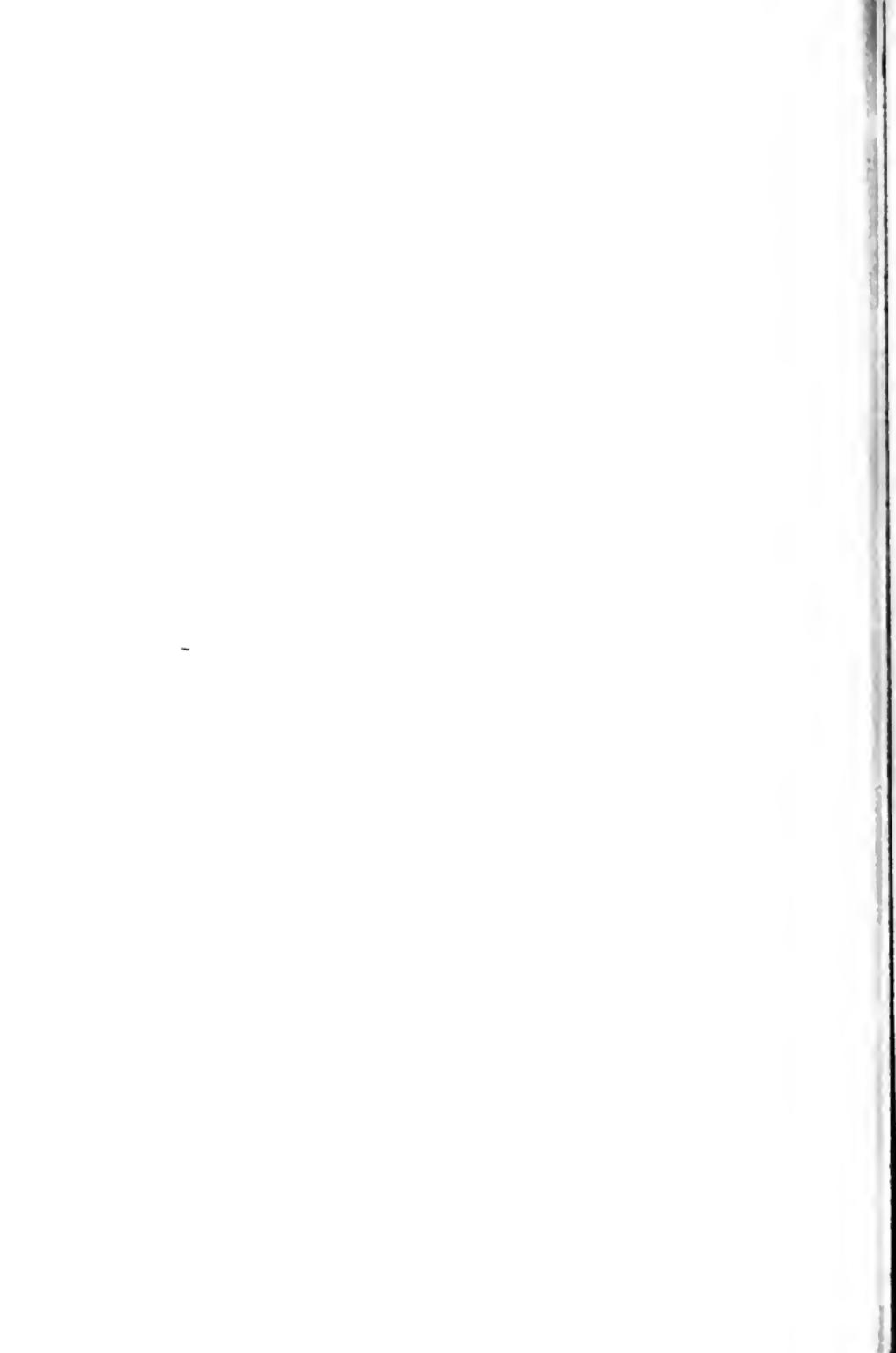
## VII

## INFLUENCE

“No literary man in the nineteenth century,” says the writer just quoted, “is likely to stand out more distinctly than Thomas Carlyle, both for faults and genius, to the centuries that will follow.” “All modern literature,” says Lowell, “has felt his influence in the right direction.” His influence has, in truth, been deep and far-reaching, nor is it yet anything like exhausted. Nearly every writer of distinction in his own age acknowledged that he owed something to Carlyle. Browning, Tennyson, Emerson, Thoreau, Kingsley, Froude, Huxley, Tyndall, Thackeray, Ruskin, William Morris, and George Meredith have all either acknowledged their indebtedness or bear evident signs of his spirit. Upon the great mass of average readers he has left a still deeper mark. By them Carlyle is reverenced as one who communicated a mighty impulse to the moral activity of his generation, warning them that the regeneration of society can only be brought about by what in theological language would be called a “conversion” and not by any change in external machinery ; teaching in convincing tones the nobility and sacredness of labour ; and making visible the Nemesis which inevitably awaits any attempt to disobey the fundamental

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on Some of the Modern Guides to English Thought in Matters of Faith.* pp. 15 and 23.

laws of spiritual life. There is, indeed, little that is new in such teaching, but it came from Carlyle with a new power. As one who was personally acquainted with him puts it, "The first moment that his spell was felt is remembered as the first sight of the Alps or of the Sea."



# CARLYLE

## LIFE OF FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

[Carlyle's "Life of Schiller" first appeared in successive issues of *The London Magazine*, a journal to which De Quincey, Hood, Hazlitt, and Lamb were contributors, during the years 1823 and 1824. After having been revised and enlarged, it was published as a book in 1825. Carlyle himself did not think highly of the work. "Schiller," he wrote while it was still in progress, "is not in my right vein, though nearer to it than anything I have yet done. In due time I shall find what I am seeking." Other critics have rated it more highly. Froude declares with justice that "few literary biographies in the English language equal it for grace, for brevity, for clearness of portraiture, and artist-like neglect of the unessential." Goethe wrote a laudatory preface to a German translation which was made under his direction in 1830. *The Life of Schiller* has none of the peculiarities of diction and arrangement that are found in Carlyle's later work. It is written throughout in a clear and simple style.]

### I

#### PROEM

AMONG the writers of the concluding part of the last century, there is none more deserving of our notice than Friedrich Schiller. Distinguished alike for the splendour of his intellectual faculties, and the elevation of his tastes and feelings, he has left behind him in his works a noble emblem of these great qualities: and the reputation which he thus enjoys, and has merited, excites our attention the more, on considering the circumstances under which it was acquired. Schiller had peculiar difficulties to strive with, and his success has likewise

been peculiar. Much of his life was deformed by quietude and disease, and it terminated at middle age; he composed in a language then scarcely settled into form, or admitted to a rank among the cultivated languages of Europe: yet his writings are remarkable for their extent and variety as well as their intrinsic excellence; and his own countrymen are not his only, or perhaps his principal admirers. It is difficult to collect or interpret the general voice; but the World, no less than Germany, seems already to have dignified him with the reputation of a classic; to have enrolled him among that select number whose works belong not wholly to any age or nation, but who, having instructed their own contemporaries, are claimed as instructors by the great family of mankind, and set apart for many centuries from the common oblivion which soon overtakes the mass of authors, as it does the mass of other men.

Such has been the high destiny of Schiller. His history and character deserve our study for more than one reason. A natural and harmless feeling attracts us towards such a subject; we are anxious to know how so great a man passed through the world, how he lived, and moved, and had his being; and the question, if properly investigated, might yield advantage as well as pleasure. It would be interesting to discover by what gifts and what employment of them he reached the eminence on which we now see him; to follow the steps of his intellectual and moral culture; to gather from his life and works some picture of himself. It is worth inquiring, whether he, who could represent noble actions so well, did himself act nobly; how those powers of intellect, which in philosophy and art achieved so much, applied themselves to the every-day emergencies of life; how the generous ardour, which delights us in his poetry, displayed itself in the common intercourse between man and man. It would at once instruct and gratify us if we could understand him thoroughly, could transport ourselves into his circumstances outward and inward, could see as he saw, and feel as he felt.

But if the various utility of such a task is palpable enough, its difficulties are not less so. We should not lightly think of comprehending the very simplest character, in all its bearings ; and it might argue vanity to boast of even a common acquaintance with one like Schiller's. Such men as he are misunderstood by their daily companions, much more by the distant observer, who gleans his information from scanty records, and casual notices of characteristic events, which biographers are often too indolent or injudicious to collect, and which the peaceful life of a man of letters usually supplies in little abundance. The published details of Schiller's history are meagre and insufficient ; and his writings, like those of every author, can afford but a dim and dubious copy of his mind. Nor is it easy to decipher even this, with moderate accuracy. The haze of a foreign language, of foreign manners, and modes of thinking strange to us, confuses and obscures the sight, often magnifying what is trivial, softening what is rude, and sometimes hiding or distorting what is beautiful. To take the dimensions of Schiller's mind were a hard enterprise, in any case ; harder still with these impediments.

Accordingly we do not, in this place, pretend to attempt it ; we have no finished portrait of his character to offer, no formal estimate of his works. It will be enough for us if, in glancing over his life, we can satisfy a simple curiosity about the fortunes and chief peculiarities of a man connected with us by a bond so kindly as that of the teacher to the taught, the giver to the receiver of mental delight ; if, in wandering through his intellectual creation, we can enjoy once more the magnificent and fragrant beauty of that fairy land, and express our feelings, where we do not aim at judging and deciding.

## II

## SCHILLER AND GOETHE

AMONG these (then at Weimar) the chief in all respects was Goethe. It was during his present visit, that Schiller first met with this illustrious person; concerning whom, both by reading and report, his expectations had been raised so high. No two men, both of exalted genius, could be possessed of more different sorts of excellence, than the two that were now brought together, in a large company of their mutual friends. The English reader may form some approximate conception of the contrast, by figuring an interview between Shakspeare and Milton. How gifted, how diverse, in their gifts! The mind of the one plays calmly, in its capricious and inimitable graces, over all the provinces of human interest; the other concentrates powers as vast, but far less various, on a few subjects; the one is catholic, the other is sectarian. The first is endowed with an all-comprehending spirit; skilled, as if by personal experience, in all the modes of human passion and opinion; therefore, tolerant of all; peaceful, collected; fighting for no class of men or principles; rather looking on the world, and the various battles waging in it, with the quiet eye of one already reconciled to the futility of their issues; but pouring over all the forms of many-coloured life the light of a deep and subtle intellect, and the decorations of an overflowing fancy; and allowing men and things of every shape and hue to have their own free scope in his conception, as they have it in the world where Providence has placed them. The other is earnest, devoted; struggling with a thousand mighty projects of improvement; feeling more intensely as he feels more narrowly; rejecting vehemently, choosing vehemently; at war with the one half of things, in love with the other half; hence dissatisfied, impetuous, without internal rest, and scarcely conceiving the possibility of such a state. Apart from

the difference of their opinions and mental culture, Shakspeare and Milton seem to have stood in some such relation as this to each other, in regard to the primary structure of their minds. So likewise, in many points, was it with Goethe and Schiller. The external circumstances of the two were, moreover, such as to augment their several peculiarities. Goethe was in his thirty-ninth year; and had long since found his proper rank and settlement in life. Schiller was ten years younger, and still without a fixed destiny; on both of which accounts, his fundamental scheme of thought, the principles by which he judged and acted, and maintained his individuality, although they might be settled, were less likely to be sobered and matured. In these circumstances we can hardly wonder that on Schiller's part the first impression was not very pleasant. Goethe sat talking of Italy, and art, and travelling, and a thousand other subjects, with that flow of brilliant and deep sense, sarcastic humour, knowledge, fancy, and good nature, which is said to render him the best talker now alive.<sup>1</sup> Schiller looked at him in quite a different mood; he felt his natural constraint increased under the influence of a man so opposite in character; so potent in resources, so singular and so expert in using them; a man whom he could not agree with, and knew not how to contradict. Soon after their interview, he thus writes:

“On the whole, this personal meeting has not at all diminished the idea, great as it was, which I had previously formed of Goethe; but I doubt whether we shall ever come into any close communication with each other. Much that still interests me has already had its epoch with him. His whole nature is, from its very origin, otherwise constructed than mine; his world is not my world; our modes of conceiving things appear to be essentially different. From such a combination, no secure, substantial intimacy can result. Time will try.” \* \* \*

A strict similarity of characters is not necessary, or

perhaps very favourable, to friendship. To render it complete, each party must no doubt be competent to understand the other; both must be possessed of dispositions kindred in their great lineaments: but the pleasure of comparing our ideas and emotions is heightened, when there is "likeness in unlikeness." *The same sentiments, different opinions*, Rousseau conceives to be the best material of friendship: reciprocity of kind words and actions is more effectual than all. Luther loved Melanthon; Johnson was not more the friend of Edmund Burke than of poor old Dr. Levitt. Goethe and Schiller met again; as they ultimately came to live together, and to see each other oftener, they liked each other better; they became associates, friends; and the harmony of their intercourse, strengthened by many subsequent communities of object, was never interrupted, till death put an end to it. Goethe, in his time, has done many glorious things; but few on which we should look back with greater pleasure than his treatment of Schiller. Literary friendships are said to be precarious, and of rare occurrence: the rivalry of interest disturbs their continuance; a rivalry greater, where the subject of competition is one so vague, impalpable, and fluctuating, as the favour of the public; where the feeling to be gratified is one so nearly allied to vanity, the most irritable, arid, and selfish feeling of the human heart. Had Goethe's prime motive been the love of fame, he must have viewed with repugnance, not the misdirection but the talents of the rising genius, advancing with such rapid strides to dispute with him the palm of intellectual primacy, nay as the million thought, already in possession of it; and if a sense of his own dignity had withheld him from offering obstructions, or uttering any whisper of discontent, there is none but a truly patrician spirit that would cordially have offered aid. To being secretly hostile and openly indifferent, the next resource was to enact the patron; to solace vanity, by helping the rival whom he could not hinder, and who could do without his help. Goethe adopted neither of these plans. It reflects much credit

on him that he acted as he did. Eager to forward Schiller's views by exerting all the influence within his power, he succeeded in effecting this; and what was still more difficult, in suffering the character of benefactor to merge in that of equal. They became not friends only, but fellow-labourers: a connection productive of important consequences in the history of both, particularly of the younger and more undirected of the two.

## GERMAN CRITICISM

[The essay on "The State of German Literature" was contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* of October 1827. It was preceded by an article on "J. P. F. Richter" in the June of the same year, and followed by a number of others dealing with various sides of German literature, which established Carlyle as the chief interpreter of German thought to his contemporaries. Carlyle found in the teaching of the great Germans the solution of many of his own spiritual difficulties. His service in directing English attention to the value of German literature—then almost a closed book in this country—is treated in the Introduction.]

CRITICISM has assumed a new form in Germany; it proceeds on other principles, and proposes to itself a higher aim. The grand question is not now a question concerning the qualities of diction, the coherence of metaphors, the fitness of sentiments, the general logical truth, in a work of art, as it was some half century ago among most critics; neither is it a question mainly of a psychological sort, to be answered by discovering and delineating the peculiar nature of the poet from his poetry, as is usual with the best of our own critics at present: but it is, not indeed exclusively, but inclusively of those two other questions, properly and ultimately a question on the essence and peculiar life of the poetry itself. The first of these questions, as we see it answered, for instance, in the criticisms of Johnson and Kames, relates, strictly speaking, to the *garment* of poetry; the second, indeed, to its *body* and material existence, a much higher point; but only the last to its *soul* and spiritual existence, by which alone can the body, in its movements and phases, be *informed* with significance and rational life. The problem is not now to determine by what mechanism Addison composed

sentences, and struck out similitudes ; but by what far finer and more mysterious mechanism Shakspeare organised his dramas, and gave life and individuality to his Ariel and his Hamlet. Wherein lies that life ; how have they attained that shape and individuality ? Whence comes that empyrean fire, which irradiates their whole being, and pierces, at least in starry gleams, like a diviner thing, into all hearts ? Are these dramas of his not verisimilar only, but true ; nay, truer than reality itself, since the essence of unmixed reality is bodied forth in them under more expressive symbols ? What is this unity of theirs ; and can our deeper inspection discern it to be indivisible, and existing by necessity, because each work springs, as it were, from the general elements of all Thought, and grows up therefrom, into form and expansion by its own growth ? Not only who was the poet, and how did he compose ; but what and how was the poem, and why was it a poem and not rhymed eloquence, creation and not figured passion ? These are the questions for the critic. Criticism stands like an interpreter between the inspired and the uninspired ; between the prophet and those who hear the melody of his words, and catch some glimpse of their material meaning, but understand not their deeper import. She pretends to open for us this deeper import ; to clear our sense that it may discern the pure brightness of this eternal Beauty, and recognise it as heavenly, under all forms where it looks forth, and reject, as of the earth earthy, all forms, be their material splendour what it may, where no gleaming of that other shines through.

This is the task of Criticism as the Germans understand it. And how do they accomplish this task ? By a vague declamation clothed in gorgeous mystic phraseology ? By vehement tumultuous anthems to the poet and his poetry ; by epithets and laudatory similitudes drawn from Tartarus and Elysium, and all intermediate terrors and glories ; whereby, in truth, it is rendered clear both that the poet is an extremely great poet, and also that the critic's allotment of understanding, over-

flowed by these Pythian raptures, has unhappily melted into delirium? Nowise in this manner do the Germans proceed: but by rigorous scientific inquiry; by appeal to principles which, whether correct or not, have been deduced patiently, and by long investigation, from the highest and calmest regions of Philosophy. For this finer portion of their Criticism is now also embodied in systems; and standing, so far as these reach, coherent, distinct and methodical, no less than, on their much shallower foundation, the systems of Boileau and Blair. That this new Criticism is a complete, much more a certain science, we are far from meaning to affirm: the *aesthetic* theories of Kant, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, Richter, vary in external aspect, according to the varied habits of the individual; and can at best only be regarded as approximations to the truth, or modifications of it; each critic representing it, as it harmonises more or less perfectly with the other intellectual persuasions of his own mind, and of different classes of minds that resemble his. Nor can we here undertake to inquire what degree of such approximation to the truth there is in each or all of these writers; or in Tieck and the two Schlegels, who, especially the latter, have laboured so meritoriously in reconciling these various opinions; and so successfully in impressing and diffusing the best spirit of them, first in their own country, and now also in several others. Thus much, however, we will say: That we reckon the mere circumstance of such a science being in existence, a ground of the highest consideration, and worthy the best attention of all inquiring men. For we should err widely if we thought that this new tendency of critical science pertains to Germany alone. It is a European tendency, and springs from the general condition of intellect in Europe. We ourselves have all, for the last thirty years, more or less distinctly felt the necessity of such a science: witness the neglect into which our Blairs and Bossus have silently fallen; our increased and increasing admiration, not only of Shakspeare, but of all his contemporaries, and of all who breathe any portion of his spirit; our contro-

versy whether Pope was a poet; and so much vague effort on the part of our best critics, everywhere to express some still unexpressed idea concerning the nature of true poetry; as if they felt in their hearts that a pure glory, nay a divineness, belonged to it, for which they had as yet no name, and no intellectual form. But in Italy too, in France itself, the same thing is visible. Their grand controversy, so hotly urged, between the *Classicists* and *Romanticists*, in which the Schlegels are assumed, much too loosely, on all hands, as the patrons and generalissimos of the latter, shows us sufficiently what spirit is at work in that long-stagnant literature. Doubtless this turbid fermentation of the elements will at length settle into clearness, both there and here, as in Germany it has already in a great measure done; and perhaps a more serene and genial poetic day is everywhere to be expected with some confidence. How much the example of the Germans may have to teach us in this particular, needs no further exposition.

The authors and first promulgators of this new critical doctrine were at one time contemptuously named the *New School*; nor was it till after a war of all the few good heads in the nation, with all the many bad ones, had ended as such wars must ever do,<sup>1</sup> that these critical principles were generally adopted; and their assertors found to be no *School*, or new heretical Sect, but the ancient primitive Catholic Communion, of which all sects

<sup>1</sup> It began in Schiller's *Musenalmanach* for 1797. The *Xenien* (a series of philosophic epigrams jointly by Schiller and Goethe) descended there unexpectedly, like a flood of ethereal fire, on the German literary world; quickening all that was noble into new life, but visiting the ancient empire of Dulness with astonishment and unknown pangs. The agitation was extreme; scarcely since the age of Luther has there been such stir and strife in the intellect of Germany; indeed, scarcely since that age has there been a controversy, if we consider its ultimate bearings on the best and noblest interests of mankind, so important as this, which, for the time, seemed only to turn on metaphysical subtleties, and matters of mere elegance. Its farther applications became apparent by degrees.

that had any living light in them were but members and subordinate modes. It is, indeed, the most sacred article of this creed to preach and practise universal tolerance. Every literature of the world has been cultivated by the Germans ; and to every literature they have studied to give due honour. Shakspeare and Homer, no doubt, occupy alone the loftiest station in the poetical Olympus ; but there is space in it for all true Singers out of every age and clime. Ferdusi and the primeval Mythologists of Hindostan live in brotherly union with the Troubadours and ancient Storytellers of the West. The wayward mystic gloom of Calderon, the lurid fire of Dante, the auroral light of Tasso, the clear icy glitter of Racine, all are acknowledged and reverenced ; nay, in the celestial forecourt an abode has been appointed for the Gressets and Delilles, that no spark of inspiration, no tone of mental music, might remain unrecognised. The Germans study foreign nations in a spirit which deserves to be oftener imitated. It is their honest endeavour to understand each, with its own peculiarities, in its own special manner of existing ; not that they may praise it, or censure it, or attempt to alter it, but simply that they may see this manner of existing as the nation itself sees it, and so participate in whatever worth or beauty it has brought into being. Of all literatures, accordingly, the German has the best as well as the most translations ; men like Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, Schlegel, Tieck, have not disdained this task. Of Shakspeare there are three entire versions admitted to be good ; and we know not how many partial, or considered as bad. In their criticisms of him we ourselves have long ago admitted, that no such clear judgment or hearty appreciation of his merits had ever been exhibited by any critic of our own.

To attempt stating in separate aphorisms the doctrines of this new poetical system, would, in such space as is now allowed us, be to insure them of misapprehension. The science of Criticism, as the Germans practise it, is no study of an hour ; for it springs from the depths of thought, and remotely or immediately connects itself

with the subtlest problems of all philosophy. One characteristic of it we may state, the obvious parent of many other. Poetic beauty, in its pure essence, is not, by this theory, as by all our theories, from Hume's to Alison's, derived from anything external, or of merely intellectual origin ; not from association, or any reflex or reminiscence of mere sensations ; nor from natural love, either of imitation, of similarity in dissimilarity, of excitement by contrast, or of seeing difficulties overcome. On the contrary, it is assumed as underived ; not borrowing its existence from such sources, but as lending to most of these their significance and principal charm for the mind. It dwells and is born in the inmost Spirit of Man, united to all love of Virtue, to all true belief in God ; or, rather, it is one with this love and this belief, another phase of the same highest principle in the mysterious infinitude of the human Soul. To apprehend this beauty of poetry, in its full and purest brightness, is not easy, but difficult : thousands on thousands eagerly read poems, and attain not the smallest taste of it ; yet to all uncorrupted hearts, some effulgences of this heavenly glory are here and there revealed ; and to apprehend it clearly and wholly, to acquire and maintain a sense and heart that sees and worships it, is the last perfection of all humane culture.

## BURNS

[The famous essay on Burns was Carlyle's third contribution to the *Edinburgh Review*, where it appeared in December 1828. Jeffrey, the editor at the time, made many excisions and alterations, but fortunately Carlyle refused to submit to this treatment, and at last Jeffrey yielded to his contributor. The *Essay on Burns* is one of the very best of Carlyle's essays, composed, as Froude says, with an evidently peculiar interest because some of the outward circumstances of Burns's life bore a striking resemblance to Carlyle's own lot. It was the first adequate appreciation of Burns, and the view put forward of the Scottish poet's character has won general acceptance. Dr. Garnett speaks of the essay as "the very voice of Scotland, expressive of all her passionate love and tragic sorrow for her darling son."]

BURNS first came upon the world as a prodigy ; and was, in that character, entertained by it, in the usual fashion, with loud, vague, tumultuous wonder, speedily subsiding into censure and neglect ; till his early and most mournful death again awakened an enthusiasm for him, which, especially as there was now nothing to be done, and much to be spoken, has prolonged itself even to our own time. It is true, the "nine days" have long since elapsed ; and the very continuance of this clamour proves that Burns was no vulgar wonder. Accordingly, even in sober judgments, where, as years passed by, he has come to rest more and more exclusively on his own intrinsic merits, and may now be wellnigh shorn of that casual radiance, he appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century. Let it not be objected that he did little. He did much, if we consider where and how. If the work performed was small, we must remember that he had his very materials to discover ; for the metal he worked in lay

hid under the desert moor, where no eye but his had guessed its existence ; and we may almost say, that with his own hand he had to construct the tools for fashioning it. For he found himself in deepest obscurity, without help, without instruction, without model ; or with models only of the meanest sort. An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time, and he works, accordingly, with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is *his* state who stands on the outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed, or remain forever shut against him ! His means are the commonest and rudest ; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains ; but no dwarf will hew them down with the pickaxe ; and he must be a Titan that hurls them abroad with his arms.

It is in this last shape that Burns presents himself. Born in an age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen, and in a condition the most disadvantageous, where his mind, if it accomplished aught, must accomplish it under the pressure of continual bodily toil, nay of penury and desponding apprehension of the worst evils, and with no furtherance but such knowledge as dwells in a poor man's hut, and the rhymes of a Ferguson or Ramsay for his standard of beauty, he sinks not under all these impediments : through the fogs and darkness of that obscure region, his lynx eye discerns the true relations of the world and human life ; he grows into intellectual strength, and trains himself into intellectual expertness. Impelled by the expansive movement of his own irrepressible soul, he struggles forward into the general view ; and with haughty modesty lays down before us, as the fruit of his labour, a gift, which Time has now pronounced imperishable. Add to all this, that his darksome, drudging childhood and youth was by far the kindest era of his whole life ; and that he died in his thirty-seventh year : and then ask, If it be

strange that his poems are imperfect, and of small extent, or that his genius attained no mastery in its art? Alas, his Sun shone as through a tropical tornado ; and the pale Shadow of Death eclipsed it at noon ! Shrouded in such baleful vapours, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendour, enlightening the world ; but some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through ; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colours, into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears !

We are anxious not to exaggerate ; for it is exposition rather than admiration that our readers require of us here ; and yet to avoid some tendency to that side is no easy matter. We love Burns, and we pity him ; and love and pity are prone to magnify. Criticism, it is sometimes thought, should be a cold business ; we are not so sure of this ; but, at all events, our concern with Burns is not exclusively that of critics. True and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us. He was often advised to write a tragedy : time and means were not lent him for this ; but through life he enacted a tragedy, and one of the deepest. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene ; whether Napoleon himself, left to bawl with Sir Hudson Lowe, and perish on his rock, "amid the melancholy main," presented to the reflecting mind such a "spectacle of pity and fear," as did this intrinsically nobler, gentler and perhaps greater soul, wasting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him, till only death opened him an outlet. Conquerors are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense ; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathising loftiness and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection ; at best it may excite amazement ; and their fall, like that of a pyramid, will be beheld with a certain sadness and awe. But a true Poet, a man in

whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the "Eternal Melodies," is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns; but with queenlike indifference she cast it from her hand, like a thing of no moment; and it was defaced and torn asunder, as an idle bauble, before we recognised it. To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny,—for so in our ignorance we must speak,—his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him; and that spirit, which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning! The "Daisy" falls not unheeded under his ploughshare; nor the ruined nest of that "wee, cowering, timorous beastie," cast forth, after all its provident pains, to "thole the sleety dribble and cranreuch cauld." The "hoar visage" of Winter delights him; he dwells with a sad and oft-returning fondness in these scenes of solemn desolation; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, for "it raises his thoughts to *Him that walketh on the wings of the wind.*" A true Poet-soul, for it needs but to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music! But observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men. What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, boundless love; what generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but

a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons of Earth. The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion, but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him: Poverty is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are dear and venerable to his heart; and thus over the lowest provinces of man's existence he pours the glory of his own soul; and they rise, in shadow and sunshine, softened and brightened into a beauty which other eyes discern not in the highest. He has a just self-consciousness, which too often degenerates into pride; yet it is a noble pride, for defence, not for offence: no cold suspicious feeling, but a frank and social one. The Peasant Poet bears himself, we might say, like a King in exile: he is cast among the low, and feels himself equal to the highest; yet he claims no rank, that none may be disputed to him. The forward he can repel, the supercilious he can subdue; pretensions of wealth or ancestry are of no avail with him; there is a fire in that dark eye, under which the "insolence of condescension" cannot thrive. In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of Poetry and Manhood. And yet, far as he feels himself above common men, he wanders not apart from them, but mixes warmly in their interests; nay, throws himself into their arms, and, as it were, entreats them to love him. It is moving to see how, in his darkest despondency, this proud being still seeks relief from friendship; unbosoms himself, often to the unworthy; and, amid tears, strains to his glowing heart a heart that knows only the name of friendship. And yet he was "quick to learn," a man of keen vision, before whom common disguises afforded no concealment. His understanding saw through the hollowness even of accomplished deceivers; but there was a generous credulity in his heart. And so did our Peasant show himself among us; "a soul like an *Æolian* harp, in whose strings the vulgar wind, as it passed through

them, changed itself into articulate melody." And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarrelling with smugglers and vintners, computing excise-dues upon tallow, and gauging alebarrels! In such toils was that mighty Spirit sorrowfully wasted: and a hundred years may pass on, before another such is given us to waste. \* \* \*

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling, as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged stirring worth pervades whatever Burns has written: a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardour of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his "lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit." And observe with what a fierce prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason; some truth to be discovered? No sophistry, no vain surface-logic detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question; and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance; three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness. And, in

that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and yet the burin of a Retzsch is not more expressive or exact.

Of this last excellence, the plainest and most comprehensive of all, being indeed the root and foundation of *every* sort of talent, poetical or intellectual, we could produce innumerable instances from the writings of Burns. Take these glimpses of a snow-storm from his *Winter Night* (the italics are ours) :

When biting Boreas, fell and doure,  
*Sharp shivers* thro' the leafless bow'r,  
 And Phœbus gies a *short-liv'd glowr*  
*Far south the lift,*  
*Dim-dark'ning* thro' the *flaky show'r*  
*Or whirling drift*:

'Ae night the storm the steeples rock'd,  
 Poor labour sweet in sleep was lock'd,  
 While burns *wi'* snawy wreaths upchock'd,  
*Wild-eddying whirl,*  
 Or thro' the mining outlet bock'd,  
 Down headlong hurl.

Are there not 'descriptive touches' here? The describer *saw* this thing; the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it; saw, and not with the eye only. "Poor labour locked in sweet sleep;" the dead stillness of man, unconscious, vanquished, yet not unprotected, while such strife of the material elements rages, and seems to reign supreme in loneliness: this is of the heart as well as of the eye!—Look also at his image of a thaw, and prophesied fall of the *Auld Brig*:

When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains  
*Wi'* deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;  
 When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,  
 Or stately Lugar's *messy* fountains boil,  
 Or where the Greenock winds his *moorland* course,  
 Or haunted Garpal<sup>1</sup> draws his feeble source,  
 Arous'd by blust'ring winds and *spotting* thowes,  
*In mony a torrent* down his *snow-bro' reves*;

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<sup>1</sup> *Fabulosus Hydaspes*!

*While crushing ice, borne on the roaring speat,  
Sweeps dams and mills and brigs a' to the gate;  
And from Glenbuck down to the Rottenkey,  
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd tumbling sea ;  
Then down ye'll hurl, Deil nor ye never rise !  
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.*

The last line is in itself a Poussin-picture of that Deluge ! The welkin has, as it were, bent down with its weight ; the “gumlie jaups” and the “pouring skies” are mingled together ; it is a world of rain and ruin.—In respect of mere clearness and minute fidelity, the *Farmer's* commendation of his *Auld Mare*, in plough or in cart, may vie with Homer's Smithy of the Cyclops, or yoking of Priam's Chariot. Nor have we forgotten stout *Burn-the-wind* and his brawny customers, inspired by *Scotch Drink* : but it is needless to multiply examples. One other trait of a much finer sort we select from multitudes of such among his *Songs*. It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling the saddest environment and local habitation :

*The pale Moon is setting beyond the white wave,  
And Time is setting wi' me, O ;  
Farewell, false friends ! false lover, farewell !  
I'll nae mair trouble them nor thee, O.*

This clearness of sight we have called the foundation of all talent ; for in fact, unless we *see* our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it, in our understanding, our imagination, our affections ? Yet it is not in itself, perhaps, a very high excellence ; but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest, or with ordinary powers. Homer surpasses all men in this quality : but strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe. It belongs, in truth, to what is called a lively mind ; and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases we have mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity ; their descriptions are detailed, ample and lovingly exact ; Homer's fire bursts through, from time to time, as if by accident ;

but Defoe and Richardson have no fire. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. Of the strength, the piercing emphasis with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his ; words more memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigour and laconic pith ? \* \* \*

Force and fineness of understanding are often spoken of as something different from general force and fineness of nature, as something partly independent of them. The necessities of language so require it ; but in truth these qualities are not distinct and independent : except in special cases, and from special causes, they ever go together. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character ; neither is delicacy in the one kind often divided from delicacy in the other. No one, at all events, is ignorant that in the Poetry of Burns, keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling ; that his *light* is not more pervading than his *warmth*. He is a man of the most impassioned temper ; with passions not strong only, but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. It is reverence, it is love towards all Nature that inspires him, that opens his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise. There is a true old saying, that "Love furthers knowledge :" but above all, it is the living essence of that knowledge which makes poets ; the first principle of its existence, increase, activity. Of Burns's fervid affection, his generous all-embracing Love, we have spoken already, as of the grand distinction of his nature, seen equally in word and deed, in his Life and in his Writings. It were easy to multiply examples. Not man only, but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight : "the hoary hawthorn," the "troop of gray plover," the "solitary curlew," all are dear to him ; all live in this Earth along with him, and to all he is knit as in mysterious brotherhood. How

touching is it, for instance, that, amidst the gloom of personal misery, brooding over the wintry desolation without him and within him, he thinks of the “ourie cattle” and “silly sheep,” and their sufferings in the pitiless storm !

I thought me on the ourie cattle,  
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle  
    O' wintry war  
Or thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,  
    Beneath a scaur.  
Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing,  
That in the merry months o' spring  
Delighted me to hear thee sing,  
    What comes o' thee ?  
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,  
    And close thy ee ?

The tenant of the mean hut, with its “ragged roof and chinky wall,” has a heart to pity even these ! This is worth several homilies on Mercy ; for it is the voice of Mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy ; his soul rushes forth into all realms of being ; nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him. The very Devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy :

But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben ;  
O wad ye tak a thought and men' !  
Ye aiblins might,—I dinna ken,—  
    Still hae a stake ;  
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,  
    Even for your sake !

“He is the father of curses and lies,” said Dr. Slop ; “and is cursed and damned already.”—“I am sorry for it,” quoth my uncle Toby !—A Poet without Love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility. \* \* \*

But by far the most finished, complete and truly inspired pieces of Burns are, without dispute, to be found among his *Songs*. It is here that, although through a small aperture, his light shines with least obstruction ; in its highest beauty, and pure sunny clearness. The reason may be, that Song is a brief simple species of composition ; and requires nothing so much for its

perfection, as genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart. Yet the Song has its rules equally with the Tragedy ; rules which in most cases are poorly fulfilled, in many cases are not so much as felt. We might write a long essay on the Songs of Burns ; which we reckon by far the best that Britain has yet produced : for, indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know not that, by any other hand, aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. True, we have songs enough "by persons of quality ;" we have tawdry, hollow, winebred madrigals ; many a rhymed speech "in the flowing and watery vein of Ossorius the Portugal Bishop," rich in sonorous words, and, for moral, dashed perhaps with some tint of a sentimental sensuality ; all which many persons cease not from endeavouring to sing ; though for most part, we fear, the music is but from the throat outwards, or at best from some region far enough short of the *Soul* ; not in which, but in a certain inane Limbo of the Fancy, or even in some vaporous debateable-land on the outskirts of the Nervous System, most of such madrigals and rhymed speeches seem to have originated. With the Songs of Burns we must not name these things. Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades *his* poetry, his Songs are honest in another point of view : in form, as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music ; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of Harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested ; not *said*, or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence ; but *sung*, in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings* not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song ; and that no songs since the little careless catches, and, as it were, drops of song, which Shakspeare has here and there sprinkled over his Plays, fulfil this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. Such grace and truth of external move-

ment, too, presupposes in general a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The Songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings, yet with what vehemence and entireness ! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy ; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or sliest mirth ; and yet he is sweet and soft, “ sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear ! ” If we farther take into account the immense variety of his subjects ; how, from the loud flowing revel in *Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut*, to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness for *Mary in Heaven* ; from the glad kind greeting of *Auld Lang syne*, or the comic archness of *Duncan Gray*, to the fire-eyed fury of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart,—it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our Song-writers ; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

It is on his Songs, as we believe, that Burns's chief influence as an author will ultimately be found to depend ; nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism is true, shall we account this a small influence. “ Let me make the songs of a people,” said he, “ and you shall make its laws.” Surely, if ever any Poet might have equalled himself with Legislators on this ground, it was Burns. His Songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only but of Britain, and of the millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-coloured joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men, as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

## VOLTAIRE

[Voltaire and Carlyle are at opposite poles in almost everything to which Carlyle held most closely, yet this essay, which first appeared in the *Foreign Review* (April 1829), is remarkable for its fair and sympathetic treatment of a thinker whose very name stirred up the prejudices of British orthodoxy. There is insight as well as candour in Carlyle's appreciation, with not a little humour in the account of Voltaire's private history.]

VOLTAIRE's worst enemies, it seems to us, will not deny that he had naturally a keen sense for rectitude, indeed for all virtue: the utmost vivacity of temperament characterises him; his quick susceptibility for every form of beauty is moral as well as intellectual. Nor was his practice without indubitable and highly creditable proofs of this. To the help-needing he was at all times a ready benefactor: many were the hungry adventurers who profited of his bounty, and then bit the hand that had fed them. If we enumerate his generous acts, from the case of the Abbé Desfontaines down to that of the Widow Calas, and the Serfs of Saint Claude, we shall find that few private men have had so wide a circle of charity, and have watched over it so well. Should it be objected that love of reputation entered largely into these proceedings, Voltaire can afford a handsome deduction on that head: should the uncharitable even calculate that love of reputation was the sole motive, we can only remind them that love of *such* reputation is itself the effect of a social, humane disposition; and wish, as an immense improvement, that all men were animated with it. Voltaire was not without his experience of human baseness; but he still had a fellow-feeling for human sufferings; and delighted, were it only as an honest luxury, to relieve them. His

attachments seem remarkably constant and lasting: even such sorts as Thiriot, whom nothing but habit could have endeared to him, he continues, and after repeated injuries, to treat and regard as friends. Of his equals we do not observe him envious, at least not palpably and despicably so; though this, we should add, might be in him, who was from the first so paramountly popular, no such hard attainment. Against Montesquieu, perhaps against him alone, he cannot help entertaining a small secret grudge; yet ever in public he does him the amplest justice; *l'Arlequin-Grotius* of the fireside becomes, on all grave occasions, the author of the *Esprit des Loix*. Neither to his enemies, and even betrayers, is Voltaire implacable or meanly vindictive; the instant of their submission is also the instant of his forgiveness; their hostility itself provokes only casual sallies from him; his heart is too kindly, indeed too light, to cherish any rancour, any continuation of revenge. If he has not the virtue to forgive, he is seldom without the prudence to forget: if, in his life-long contentions, he cannot treat his opponents with any magnanimity, he seldom, or perhaps never once, treats them quite basely; seldom or never with that absolute unfairness, which the law of retaliation might so often have seemed to justify. We would say that, if no heroic, he is at all times a perfectly civilised man; which, considering that his war was with exasperated theologians, and a "war to the knife" on their part may be looked upon as rather a surprising circumstance. He exhibits many minor virtues, a due appreciation of the highest; and fewer faults than, in his situation, might have been expected, and perhaps pardoned. \* \* \*

He is no great Man, but only a great *Persifleur*; a man for whom life, and all that pertains to it, has, at best, but a despicable meaning; who meets its difficulties not with earnest force, but with gay agility; and is found always at the top, less by power in swimming, than by lightness in floating. Take him in his character, forgetting that any other was ever ascribed to him, and

we find that he enacted it almost to perfection. Never man better understood the whole secret of *Persiflage*; meaning thereby not only the external faculty of polite contempt, but that art of general inward contempt, by which a man of this sort endeavours to subject the circumstances of his Destiny to his Volition, and be, what is the instinctive effort of all men, though in the midst of material Necessity, morally Free. Voltaire's latent derision is as light, copious and all-pervading as the derision which he utters. Nor is this so simple an attainment as we might fancy; a certain kind and degree of Stoicism, or approach to Stoicism, is necessary for the completed *Persifleur*; as for moral, or even practical completion, in any other way. The most indifferent-minded man is not by nature indifferent to his own pain and pleasure: this is an indifference which he must by some method study to acquire, or acquire the show of; and which, it is fair to say, Voltaire manifests in a rather respectable degree. Without murmuring, he has reconciled himself to most things: the human lot, in this lower world, seems a strange business, yet, on the whole, with more of the farce in it than of the tragedy; to him it is nowise heartrending, that this Planet of ours should be sent sailing through Space, like a miserable aimless Ship-of-Fools, and he himself be a fool among the rest, and only a very little wiser than they. He does not, like Bolingbroke, "patronise Providence," though such sayings as *Si Dieu n'existe pas, il faudrait l'inventer*, seem now and then to indicate a tendency of that sort: but, at all events, he never openly levies war against Heaven; well knowing that the time spent in frantic malediction, directed *thither*, might be spent otherwise with more profit. There is, truly, no *Werterism* in him, either in its bad or its good sense. If he sees no unspeakable majesty in heaven and earth, neither does he see any unsufferable horror there. His view of the world is a cool, gently scornful, altogether prosaic one: his sublimest Apocalypse of Nature lies in the microscope and telescope; the Earth is a place for producing corn;

the Starry Heavens are admirable as a nautical time-keeper. Yet, like a prudent man, he has adjusted himself to his condition, such as it is: he does not chaunt any *Miserere* over human life, calculating that no charitable dole, but only laughter, would be the reward of such an enterprise; does not hang or drown himself, clearly understanding that death of itself will soon save him that trouble. Affliction, it is true, has not for him any precious jewel in its head; on the contrary, it is an unmixed nuisance; yet, happily, not one to be howled over, so much as one to be speedily removed out of sight: if he does not learn from it Humility, and the sublime lesson of Resignation, neither does it teach him hard-heartedness and sickly discontent; but he bounds lightly over it, leaving both the jewel and the toad at a safe distance behind him. \* \* \*

At the same time, let it not be forgotten, that amid all these blighting influences, Voltaire maintains a certain indestructible humanity of nature; a soul never deaf to the cry of wretchedness; never utterly blind to the light of truth, beauty, goodness. It is even, in some measure, poetically interesting to observe this fine contradiction in him: the heart acting without directions from the head, or perhaps against its directions; the man virtuous, as it were, in spite of himself. For at all events, it will be granted that, as a private man, his existence was beneficial, not hurtful, to his fellow men: the Calases, the Sirvens, and so many orphans and outcasts whom he cherished and protected, ought to cover a multitude of sins. It was his own sentiment, and to all appearance a sincere one:

*J'ai fait un peu de bien; c'est mon meilleur ouvrage.*

Perhaps there are few men, with such principles and such temptations as his were, that could have led such a life; few that could have done his work, and come through it with cleaner hands. If we call him the greatest of all *Persifieurs*, let us add that, morally speaking also, he is the best: if he excels all men in

universality, sincerity, polished clearness of Mockery, he perhaps combines with it as much worth of heart as, in any man, that habit can admit of. \* \* \*

Voltaire's intellectual endowment and acquirement, his talent or genius as a literary man, lies opened to us in a series of Writings, unexampled, as we believe, in two respects,—their extent, and their diversity. Perhaps there is no writer, not a mere compiler, but writing from his own invention or elaboration, who has left so many volumes behind him; and if to the merely arithmetical, we add a critical estimate, the singularity is still greater; for these volumes are not written without an appearance of due care and preparation; perhaps there is not one altogether feeble and confused treatise, nay one feeble and confused sentence, to be found in them. As to variety, again, they range nearly over all human subjects; from Theology down to Domestic Economy, from the Familiar Letter to the Political History; from the Pasquinade to the Epic Poem. Some strange gift, or union of gifts, must have been at work here; for the result is, at least, in the highest degree uncommon, and to be wondered at, if not to be admired.

If, through all this many-coloured versatility, we try to decipher the essential, distinctive features of Voltaire's intellect, it seems to us that we find there a counterpart to our theory of his moral character; as, indeed, if that theory was accurate, we must do: for the thinking and the moral nature, distinguished by the necessities of speech, have no such distinction in themselves; but, rightly examined, exhibit in every case the strictest sympathy and correspondence, are, indeed, but different phases of the same indissoluble unity,—a living mind. In life, Voltaire was found to be without good claim to the title of philosopher; and now, in literature, and for similar reasons, we find in him the same deficiencies. Here too it is not greatness, but the very extreme of expertness, that we recognise; not strength, so much as agility; not depth, but superficial extent. That truly surprising ability seems rather the unparalleled combination of many common talents, than the exercise

of any finer or higher one : for here too the want of earnestness, of intense continuance, is fatal to him. He has the eye of a lynx ; sees deeper, at the first glance, than any other man ; but no second glance is given. Thus Truth, which, to the philosopher, has from of old been said to live in a well, remains for the most part hidden from him ; we may say forever hidden, if we take the highest, and only philosophicai species of Truth ; for this does not reveal itself to any mortal, without quite another sort of meditation than Voltaire ever seems to have bestowed on it. In fact, his deductions are uniformly of a forensic, argumentative, immediately practical nature ; often true, we will admit, so far as they go ; but not the whole truth ; and false, when taken for the whole. In regard to feeling, it is the same with him : he is, in general, humane, mildly affectionate, not without touches of nobleness ; but light, fitful, discontinuous ; "a smart freethinker, all things in an hour." He is no Poet and Philosopher, but a popular sweet Singer and Haranguer : in all senses, and in all styles, a *Concionator*, which, for the most part, will turn out to be an altogether different character. It is true, in this last province he stands unrivalled ; for such an audience, the most fit and perfectly persuasive of all preachers : but in many far higher provinces, he is neither perfect nor unrivalled ; has been often surpassed ; was surpassed even in his own age and nation. For a decisive, thorough-going, in any measure gigantic force of thought, he is far inferior to Diderot : with all the liveliness he has not the soft elegance, with more than the wit he has but a small portion of the wisdom, that belonged to Fontenelle : as in real sensibility, so in the delineation of it, in pathos, loftiness and earnest eloquence, he cannot, making all fair abatements, and there are many, be compared with Rousseau. \* \* \*

Perhaps it is this very power of Order, of rapid, perspicuous Arrangement, that lies at the root of Voltaire's best gifts ; or rather, we should say, it is that keen, accurate intellectual vision, from which, to a

mind of any intensity, Order naturally arises. The clear quick vision, and the methodic arrangement which springs from it, are looked upon as peculiarly French qualities; and Voltaire, at all times, manifests them in a more than French degree. Let him but cast his eye over any subject, in a moment he sees, though indeed only to a short depth, yet with instinctive decision, where the main bearings of it for that short depth lie; what is, or appears to be, its logical coherence; how causes connect themselves with effects; how the whole is to be seized, and in lucid sequence represented to his own or to other minds. In this respect, moreover, it is happy for him that, below the short depth alluded to, his view does not properly grow dim, but altogether terminates: thus there is nothing farther to occasion him misgivings; has he not already sounded into that basis of bottomless Darkness on which all things firmly rest? What lies below is delusion, imagination, some form of Superstition or Folly; which he, nothing doubting, altogether casts away. Accordingly, he is the most intelligible of writers; everywhere transparent at a glance. There is no delineation or disquisition of his, that has not its whole purport written on its forehead; all is precise, all is rightly adjusted; that keen spirit of Order shows itself in the whole, and in every line of the whole.

If we say that this power of Arrangement, as applied both to the acquisition and to the communication of ideas, is Voltaire's most serviceable faculty in all his enterprises, we say nothing singular: for take the word in its largest acceptation, and it comprehends the whole office of Understanding, logically so called; is the means whereby man accomplishes whatever, in the way of outward force, has been made possible for him; conquers all practical obstacles, and rises to be the "king of this lower world." It is the organ of all that Knowledge which can properly be reckoned synonymous with Power; for hereby man strikes with wise aim, into the infinite agencies of Nature, and multiplies his own small strength to unlimited degrees. It has been said

also that man may rise to be the “god of this lower world”; but that is a far loftier height, not attainable by such power-knowledge, but by quite another sort, for which Voltaire in particular shows hardly any aptitude. \* \* \*

However, it is nowise as a Poet, Historian or Novelist, that Voltaire stands so prominent in Europe; but chiefly as a religious Polemic, as a vehement opponent of the Christian Faith. Viewed in this last character, he may give rise to many grave reflections, only a small portion of which can here be so much as glanced at. We may say, in general, that his style of controversy is of a piece with himself; not a higher, and scarcely a lower style than might have been expected from him. As, in a moral point of view, Voltaire nowise wanted a love of truth, yet had withal a still deeper love of his own interest in truth; was, therefore, intrinsically no Philosopher, but a highly accomplished Trivialist; so likewise, in an intellectual point of view, he manifests himself ingenious and adroit, rather than noble or comprehensive; fights for truth or victory, not by patient meditation, but by light sarcasm, whereby victory may indeed, for a time, be gained; but little Truth, what can be named Truth, especially in such matters as this, is to be looked for.

No one, we suppose, ever arrogated for Voltaire any praise of originality in this discussion; we suppose there is not a single idea, of any moment, relating to the Christian Religion, in all his multifarious writings, that had not been set forth again and again before his enterprises commenced. The labours of a very mixed multitude, from Porphyry down to Shaftesbury, including Hobbeses, Tindals, Tolands, some of them sceptics of a much nobler class, had left little room for merit in this kind; nay, Bayle, his own countryman, had just finished a life spent in preaching scepticism precisely similar, and by methods precisely similar, when Voltaire appeared on the arena. Indeed, scepticism, as we have before observed, was at this period universal among the higher ranks in France, with whom Voltaire

chiefly associated. It is only in the merit and demerit of grinding down this grain into food for the people, and inducing so many to eat of it, that Voltaire can claim any singularity. However, we quarrel not with him on this head: there may be cases where the want of originality is even a moral merit. But it is a much more serious ground of offence that he intermeddled in Religion, without being himself, in any measure, religious; that he entered the Temple and continued there, with a levity, which, in any Temple where men worship, can beseem no brother man; that, in a word, he ardently, and with long-continued effort, warred against Christianity, without understanding beyond the mere superficies what Christianity was. \* \* \*

The question how Christianity originated is doubtless a high question; resolvable enough, if we view only its surface, which was all that Voltaire saw of it; involved in sacred, silent, unfathomable depths, if we investigate its interior meanings; which meanings, indeed, it may be, every new age will develop to itself in a new manner and with new degrees of light; for the whole truth may be called infinite, and to man's eye discernible only in parts; but the question itself is nowise the ultimate one in this matter.

We understand ourselves to be risking no new assertion, but simply reporting what is already the conviction of the greatest of our age, when we say,—that cheerfully recognising, gratefully appropriating whatever Voltaire has proved, or any other man has proved, or shall prove, the Christian Religion, once here, cannot again pass away; that in one or the other form, it will endure through all time; that as in Scripture, so also in the heart of man, is written, “the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” Were the memory of this Faith never so obscured, as, indeed, in all times, the coarse passions and perceptions of the world do all but obliterate it in the hearts of most; yet in every pure soul, in every Poet and Wise Man, it finds a new Missionary, a new Martyr, till the great volume of Universal History is finally closed, and man's destinies are fulfilled in this

earth. “ It is a height to which the human species were fated and enabled to attain ; and, from which, having once attained it, they can never retrograde.”

These things, which it were far out of our place to attempt adequately elucidating here, must not be left out of sight, in appreciating Voltaire’s polemical worth. We find no trace of these, or of any the like essential considerations having been present with him, in examining the Christian Religion ; nor indeed was it consistent with his general habits that they should be so. Totally destitute of religious Reverence, even of common practical seriousness ; by nature or habit, undevout both in heart and head, not only without any Belief, in other than a material sense, but without the possibility of acquiring any, he can be no safe or permanently useful guide in this investigation. We may consider him as having opened the way to future inquirers of a truer spirit ; but for his own part, as having engaged in an enterprise, the real nature of which was wellnigh unknown to him ; and engaged in it with the issue to be anticipated in such a case ; producing chiefly confusion, dislocation, destruction, on all hands ; so that the good he achieved is still, in these times, found mixed with an alarming proportion of evil, from which, indeed, men rationally doubt whether much of it will in any time be separable.

We should err widely too, if, in estimating what quantity, altogether overlooking what quality, of intellect Voltaire may have manifested on this occasion, we took the result produced as any measure of the force applied. His task was not one of Affirmation, but of Denial ; not a task of erecting and rearing up, which is slow and laborious ; but of destroying and overturning, which in most cases is rapid and far easier. The force necessary for him was nowise a great and noble one ; but a small, in some respects a mean one ; to be nimbly and seasonably put in use. The Ephesian Temple, which it had employed many wise heads and strong arms for a lifetime to build, could be *unbuilt* by one madman, in a single hour.

Of such errors, deficiencies and positive misdeeds, it appears to us a just criticism must accuse Voltaire : at the same time, we can nowise join in the condemnatory clamour which so many worthy persons, not without the best intentions, to this day keep up against him. His whole character seems to be plain enough, common enough, had not extraneous influences so perverted our views regarding it : nor, morally speaking, is it a worse character, but considerably a better one, ~~as~~ a belongs to the mass of men. Voltaire's aims in opposing the Christian Religion were unhappily of a mixed nature ; yet, after all, very nearly such aims as we have often seen directed against it, and often seen directed in its favour : a little love of finding Truth, with a great love of making Proselytes ; which last is in itself a natural, universal feeling ; and if honest, is, even in the worst cases, a subject for pity, rather than for hatred. As a light, careless, courteous Man of the World, he offers no hateful aspect ; on the contrary, a kindly, gay, rather amiable one : hundreds of men, with half his worth of disposition, die daily, and their little world laments them. It is time that he too should be judged of by his intrinsic, not by his accidental qualities ; that justice should be done to him also ; for injustice can profit no man and no cause.

## ON HISTORY

[The following extracts, which set forth Carlyle's notion of history and of how it should be written, are taken from two essays contributed to *Fraser's Magazine*, the first in 1830 and the second in 1833.]

A TALENT for History may be said to be born with us, as our chief inheritance. In a certain sense all men are historians. Is not every memory written quite full with Annals, wherein joy and mourning, conquest and loss manifoldly alternate ; and, with or without philosophy, the whole fortunes of one little inward Kingdom, and all its politics, foreign and domestic, stand ineffaceably recorded ? Our very speech is curiously historical. Most men, you may observe, speak only to narrate ; not in imparting what they have thought, which indeed were often a very small matter, but in exhibiting what they have undergone or seen, which is a quite unlimited one, do talkers dilate. Cut us off from Narrative, how would the stream of conversation, even among the wisest, languish into detached handfuls, and among the foolish utterly evaporate ! Thus, as we do nothing but enact History, we say little but recite it : nay rather, in that widest sense, our whole spiritual life is built thereon. For, strictly considered, what is all Knowledge too but recorded Experience, and a product of History ; of which, therefore, Reasoning and Belief, no less Action and Passion, are essential materials ?

Under a limited, and the only practicable shape, History proper, that part of History which treats of remarkable action, has, in all modern as well as ancient times, ranked among the highest arts, and perhaps never stood higher than in these times of ours. For

whereas, of old, the charm of History lay chiefly in gratifying our common appetite for the wonderful, for the unknown ; and her office was but as that of a Minstrel and Story-teller, she has now farther become a Schoolmistress, and professes to instruct in gratifying. Whether, with the stateliness of that venerable character, she may not have taken up something of its austerity and frigidity ; whether, in the logical terseness of a Hume or Robertson, the graceful ease and gay pictorial heartiness of a Herodotus or Froissart may not be wanting, is not the question for us here. Enough that all learners, all inquiring minds of every order, are gathered round her footstool, and reverently pondering her lessons, as the true basis of Wisdom. Poetry, Divinity, Politics, Physics, have each their adherents and adversaries ; each little guild supporting a defensive and offensive war for its own special domain ; while the domain of History is as a Free Emporium, where all these belligerents peaceably meet and furnish themselves ; and Sentimentalist and Utilitarian, Sceptic and Theologian, with one voice advise us : Examine History, for it is “ Philosophy teaching by Experience.”

Far be it from us to disparage such teaching, the very attempt at which must be precious. Neither shall we too rigidly inquire : How much it has hitherto profited ? Whether most of what little practical wisdom men have, has come from study of professed History, or from other less boasted sources, whereby, as matters now stand, a Marlborough may become great in the world’s business, with no History save what he derives from Shakspeare’s Plays ? Nay, whether in that same teaching by Experience, historical Philosophy has yet properly deciphered the first element of all science in this kind ? What the aim and significance of that wondrous changeful Life it investigates and paints may be ? Whence the course of man’s destinies in this Earth originated, and whither they are tending ? Or, indeed, if they have any course and tendency, are really guided forward by an unseen mysterious Wisdom, or

only circle in blind mazes without recognisable guidance? Which questions, altogether fundamental, one might think, in any Philosophy of History, have, since the era when Monkish Annalists were wont to answer them by the long-ago extinguished light of their Missal and Breviary, been by most philosophical Historians only glanced at dubiously and from afar ; by many, not so much as glanced at.

The truth is, two difficulties, never wholly surmountable, lie in the way. Before Philosophy can teach by Experience, the Philosophy has to be in readiness, the Experience must be gathered and intelligibly recorded. Now, overlooking the former consideration, and with regard only to the latter, let any one who has examined the current of human affairs, and how intricate, perplexed, unfathomable, even when seen into with our own eyes, are their thousandfold blending movements, say whether the true representing of it is easy or impossible. Social Life is the aggregate of all the individual men's Lives who constitute society ; History is the essence of innumerable Biographies. But if one Biography, nay our own Biography, study and recapitulate it as we may, remains in so many points unintelligible to us ; how much more must these million, the very facts of which, to say nothing of the purport of them, we know not, and cannot know !

Neither will it adequately avail us to assert that the general inward condition of Life is the same in all ages ; and that only the remarkable deviations from the common endowment and common lot, and the more important variations which the outward figure of Life has from time to time undergone, deserve memory and record. The inward condition of Life, it may rather be affirmed, the conscious or half-conscious aim of mankind, so far as men are not mere digesting-machines, is the same in no two ages ; neither are the more important outward variations easy to fix on, or always well capable of representation. Which was the greatest innovator, which was the more important personage in man's history, he who first led armies over the Alps,

and gained the victories of Cannæ and Thrasymene ; or the nameless boor who first hammered out for himself an iron spade ? When the oak-tree is felled, the whole forest echoes with it ; but a hundred acorns are planted silently by some unnoticed breeze. Battles and war-tumults, which for the time din every ear, and with joy or terror intoxicate every heart, pass away like tavern-brawls ; and, except some few Marathons and Morgartens, are remembered by accident, not by desert. Laws themselves, political Constitutions, are not our Life, but only the house wherein our Life is led : nay, they are but the bare walls of the house ; all whose essential furniture, the inventions and traditions, and daily habits that regulate and support our existence, are the work not of Dracos and Hampdens, but of Phœnician mariners, of Italian masons and Saxon metallurgists, of philosophers, alchymists, prophets, and all the long-forgotten train of artists and artisans ; who from the first have been jointly teaching us how to think and how to act, how to rule over spiritual and over physical Nature. Well may we say that of our History the more important part is lost without recovery ; and,—as thanksgivings were once wont to be offered “for unrecognised mercies,”—look with reverence into the dark untenanted places of the Past, where, in formless oblivion, our chief benefactors, with all their sedulous endeavours, but not with the fruit of these, lie entombed. \* \* \*

Such considerations truly were of small profit, did they, instead of teaching us vigilance and reverent humility in our inquiries into History, abate our esteem for them, or discourage us from unweariedly prosecuting them. Let us search more and more into the Past ; let all men explore it as the true fountain of knowledge ; by whose light alone, consciously or unconsciously employed, can the Present and the Future be interpreted or guessed at. For though the whole meaning lies far beyond our ken ; yet in that complex Manuscript, covered over with formless inextricably-entangled unknown characters,—nay which is a *Palimpsest*, and had

once prophetic writing, still dimly legible there,—some letters, some words, may be deciphered ; and if no complete Philosophy, here and there an intelligible precept, available in practice, be gathered ; well understanding, in the mean while, that it is only a little portion we have deciphered ; that much still remains to be interpreted ; that History is a real Prophetic Manuscript, and can be fully interpreted by no man.

But the Artist in History may be distinguished from the Artisan in History ; for here, as in all other provinces, there are Artists and Artisans ; men who labour mechanically in a department, without eye for the Whole, not feeling that there is a Whole ; and men who inform and ennable the humblest department with an Idea of the Whole, and habitually know that only in the Whole is the Partial to be truly discerned. The proceedings and the duties of these two, in regard to History, must be altogether different. Not, indeed, that each has not a real worth, in his several degree. The simple husbandman can till his field, and by knowledge he has gained of its soil, sow it with the fit grain, though the deep rocks and central fires are unknown to him : his little crop hangs under and over the firmament of stars, and sails through whole untracked celestial spaces, between Aries and Libra ; nevertheless, it ripens for him in due season, and he gathers it safe into his barn. As a husbandman he is blameless in disregarding those higher wonders ; but as a thinker, and faithful inquirer into Nature, he were wrong. So likewise is it with the Historian, who examines some special aspect of History ; and from this or that combination of circumstances, political, moral, economical, and the issues it has led to, infers that such and such properties belong to human society, and that the like circumstances will produce the like issue ; which inference, if other trials confirm it, must be held true and practically valuable. He is wrong only, and an artisan, when he fancies that these properties, discovered or discoverable, exhaust the matter ; and sees not, at every step, that it is inexhaustible.

However, that class of cause-and-effect speculators,

with whom no wonder would remain wonderful, but all things in Heaven and Earth must be computed and "accounted for;" and even the Unknown, the Infinite in man's Life, had, under the words *enthusiasm, superstition, spirit of the age* and so forth, obtained, as it were, an algebraical symbol and given value,—have now wellnigh played their part in European culture; and may be considered, as in most countries, even in England itself where they linger the latest, verging towards extinction. He who reads the inscrutable Book of Nature as if it were a Merchant's Ledger, is justly suspected of having never seen that Book, but only some school Synopsis thereof; from which, if taken for the real Book, more error than insight is to be derived.

Doubtless, also, it is with a growing feeling of the infinite nature of History, that in these times, the old principle, division of labour, has been so widely applied to it. The Political Historian, once almost the sole cultivator of History, has now found various associates, who strive to elucidate other phases of human Life; of which, as hinted above, the political conditions it is passed under are but one, and though the primary, perhaps not the most important, of the many outward arrangements. Of this Historian himself, moreover, in his own special department, new and higher things are beginning to be expected. From of old, it was too often to be reproachfully observed of him, that he dwelt with disproportionate fondness in Senate-houses, in Battle-fields, nay even in Kings' Antechambers; forgetting, that far away from such scenes, the mighty tide of Thought and Action was still rolling on its wondrous course, in gloom and brightness; and in its thousand remote valleys, a whole world of Existence, with or without an earthly sun of Happiness to warm it, with or without a heavenly sun of Holiness to purify and sanctify it, was blossoming and fading, whether the "famous victory" were won or lost. The time seems coming when much of this must be amended; and he who sees no world but that of courts and camps; and

writes only how soldiers were drilled and shot, and how this ministerial conjuror out-conjured that other, and then guided, or at least held, something which he called the rudder of Government, but which was rather the spigot of Taxation, wherewith, in place of steering, he could tap, and the more cunningly the nearer the lees,—will pass for a more or less instructive Gazetteer, but will no longer be called a Historian.

However, the Political Historian, were his work performed with all conceivable perfection, can accomplish but a part, and still leaves room for numerous fellow-labourers. Foremost among these comes the Ecclesiastical Historian; endeavouring, with catholic or sectarian view, to trace the progress of the Church; of that portion of the social establishments, which respects our religious condition; as the other portion does our civil, or rather, in the long-run, our economical condition. Rightly conducted, this department were undoubtedly the more important of the two; inasmuch as it concerns us more to understand how man's moral well-being had been and might be promoted, than to understand in the like sort his physical well-being; which latter is ultimately the aim of all Political arrangements. \* \* \*

Of the Ecclesiastical Historian we have to complain, as we did of his Political fellow-craftsman, that his inquiries turn rather on the outward mechanism, the mere hulls and superficial accidents of the object, than on the object itself: as if the Church lay in Bishops' Chapter-houses, and Ecumenic Council-halls, and Cardinals' Conclaves, and not far more in the hearts of Believing Men; in whose walk and conversation, as influenced thereby, its chief manifestations were to be looked for, and its progress or decline ascertained. The History of the Church is a History of the Invisible as well as of the Visible Church; which latter, if disjoined from the former, is but a vacant edifice; gilded, it may be, and overhung with old votive gifts, yet useless, nay pestilentially unclean; to write whose history is less important than to forward its downfall. \* \* \*

Art also and Literature are intimately blended with Religion; as it were, outworks and abutments, by which that highest pinnacle in our inward world gradually connects itself with the general level, and becomes accessible therefrom. He who should write a proper History of Poetry, would depict for us the successive Revelations which man had obtained of the Spirit of Nature; under what aspects he had caught and endeavoured to body forth some glimpse of that unspeakable Beauty, which in its highest clearness is Religion, is the inspiration of a Prophet, yet in one or the other degree must inspire every true Singer, were his theme never so humble. We should see by what steps men had ascended to the Temple; how near they had approached; by what ill hap they had, for long periods, turned away from it, and grovelled on the plain with no music in the air, or blindly struggled towards other heights. That among all our Eichhorns and Wartons there is no such Historian, must be too clear to every one. Nevertheless let us not despair of far nearer approaches to that excellence. Above all, let us keep the ideal of it ever in our eye; for thereby alone have we even a chance to reach it.

Our histories of Laws and Constitutions, wherein many a Montesquieu and Hallam has laboured with acceptance, are of a much simpler nature; yet deep enough if thoroughly investigated; and useful, when authentic, even with little depth. Then we have Histories of Medicine, of Mathematics, of Astronomy, Commerce, Chivalry, Monkery; and Goguets and Beckmanns have come forward with what might be the most bountiful contribution of all, a History of Inventions. Of all which sorts, and many more not here enumerated, not yet devised and put in practice, the merit and the proper scheme may require no exposition.

In this manner, though, as above remarked, all Action is extended three ways, and the general sum of human Action is a whole Universe, with all limits of it unknown, does History strive by running path after path, through the Impassable, in manifold directions

and intersections, to secure for us some oversight of the Whole ; in which endeavour, if each Historian look well around him from his path, tracking it out with the *eye*, not, as is more common, with the *nose*, she may at last prove not altogether unsuccessful. Praying only that increased division of labour do not here, as elsewhere, aggravate our already strong Mechanical tendencies, so that in the manual dexterity for parts we lose all command over the whole, and the hope of any Philosophy of History be farther off than ever,— let us all wish her great and greater success. \* \* \*

To use a ready-made similitude, we might liken Universal History to a magic web ; and consider with astonishment how, by philosophic insight and indolent neglect, the ever-growing fabric wove itself forward, out of that ravelled immeasurable mass of threads and thrums, which we name *Memoirs* ; nay, at each new lengthening, at each new *epoch*, changed its whole proportions, its hue and structure to the very origin. Thus, do not the records of a Tacitus acquire new meaning, after seventeen hundred years, in the hands of a Montesquieu ? Niebuhr must reinterpret for us, at a still greater distance, the writings of a Titus Livius : nay, the religious archaic chronicles of a Hebrew Prophet and Lawgiver escape not the like fortune ; and many a ponderous Eichhorn scans, with new-ground philosophic spectacles, the revelation of a Moses, and strives to reproduce for this century what, thirty centuries ago, was of plainly infinite significance to all. Consider History with the beginnings of it stretching dimly into the remote Time ; emerging darkly out of the mysterious Eternity : the ends of it enveloping *us* at this hour, whereof we at this hour, both as actors and relators, form part ! In shape we might mathematically name it *Hyperbolic-Asymptotic* ; ever of *infinite* breadth around us : soon shrinking within narrow limits : ever narrowing more and more into the infinite depth behind us. In essence and significance it has been called “ the true Epic Poem, and universal Divine Scripture, whose ‘ plenary inspiration ’ no man, out of Bedlam or in it, shall bring in question.”

## GOETHE

[Goethe was Carlyle's ideal of "a great heroic ancient man, speaking and keeping silence as an ancient Hero, in the guise of a most modern, high-bred, high-cultivated Man of Letters." In addition to several translations and prefaces Carlyle wrote four essays of considerable length on Goethe. Our extract is taken from a review of Goethe's Works written in 1832 for the *Foreign Quarterly Review*.]

OF Goethe's spiritual Endowment, looked at on the Intellectual side, we have (as indeed lies in the nature of things, for moral and intellectual are fundamentally one and the same) to pronounce a similar opinion ; that it is great among the very greatest. As the first gift of all, may be discerned here utmost Clearness, all-piercing faculty of Vision ; whereto, as we ever find it, all other gifts are superadded ; nay, properly they are but other forms of the same gift. A nobler power of insight than this of Goethe you in vain look for, since Shakspeare passed away. In fact, there is much every way, here in particular, that these two minds have in common. Shakspeare too does not look *at* a thing, but into it, through it ; so that he constructively comprehends it, can take it asunder, and put it together again ; the thing melts, as it were, into light under his eye, and anew *creates* itself before him. That is to say, he is a Thinker in the highest of all senses : he is a Poet. For Goethe, as for Shakspeare, the world lies all translucent, all *fusible* we might call it, encircled with WONDER ; the Natural in reality the Supernatural, for to the seer's eyes both become one. What are the *Hamlets* and *Tempests*, the *Fausts* and *Mignons*, but glimpses accorded us into this translucent, wonder-encircled world ; revelations of the mystery of all mysteries, Man's Life as it actually is ?

Under other secondary aspects, the poetical faculty of the two will still be found cognate. Goethe is full of *figurativeness*; this grand light-giving Intellect, as all such are, is an imaginative one,—and in a quite other sense than most of our unhappy *Imaginatives* will imagine. Gall the Craniologist declared him to be a born *Volksredner* (popular orator), both by the figure of his brow, and what was still more decisive, because “he could not speak but a figure came.” Gall saw what was high as his own nose reached,

High as the nose doth reach, all clear!  
What higher lies, they ask: Is it here?

A far different figurativeness was this of Goethe than popular oratory has work for. In figures of the popular-oratory kind, Goethe, throughout his Writings at least, is nowise the most copious man known to us, though on a stricter scrutiny we may find him the richest. Of your ready-made, coloured-paper metaphors, such as can be sewed or plastered on the surface, by way of giving an ornamental finish to the rag-web already woven, we speak not; there is not one such to be discovered in all his Works. But even in the use of genuine metaphors, which are not haberdashery ornament, but the genuine new vesture of new thoughts, he yields to lower men (for example to Jean Paul); that is to say, in fact, he is more master of the *common* language, and can oftener make *it* serve him. Goethe's figurativeness lies in the very centre of his being; manifests itself as the constructing of the inward elements of a thought, as the *vital* embodiment of it: such figures as those of Goethe you will look for through all modern literature, and except here and there in Shakspeare, nowhere find a trace of. Again, it is the same faculty in higher exercise, that enables the poet to construct a Character. Here too Shakspeare and Goethe, unlike innumerable others, are *vital*; their construction begins at the *heart* and flows outward as the life-streams do; fashioning the *surface*, as it were, spontaneously. Those

Macbeths and Falstaffs, accordingly, these Fausts and Philinas have a verisimilitude and life that separates them from all other fictions of late ages. All others, in comparison, have more or less the nature of hollow vizards, constructed from without inwards, painted *like*, and deceptively put in motion. Many years ago on finishing our first perusal of *Wilhelm Meister*, with a very mixed sentiment in other respects, we could not but feel that here lay more insight into the elements of human nature, and a more poetically perfect combining of these than in all the other fictitious literature of our generation.

Neither, as an additional similarity (for the great is ever like itself), let the majestic Calmness of both be omitted ; their perfect tolerance for all men and all things. This too proceeds from the same source, perfect clearness of vision : he who comprehends an object cannot hate it, has already begun to love it. In respect of style, no less than of character, this calmness and graceful smooth-flowing softness is again characteristic of both ; though in Goethe the quality is more complete, having been matured by far more assiduous study. Goethe's style is perhaps to be reckoned the most excellent that our modern world, in any language, can exhibit. "Even to a foreigner," says one, "it is full of character and secondary meanings ; polished, yet vernacular and cordial, it sounds like the dialect of wise, antique-minded, true-hearted men : in poetry, brief, sharp, simple and expressive : in prose, perhaps, still more pleasing ; for it is at once concise and full, rich, clear, unpretending and melodious ; and the sense, not presented in alternating flashes, piece after piece revealed and withdrawn, rises before us as in continuous dawning, and stands at last simultaneously complete, and bathed in the mellowest and ruddiest sunshine. It brings to mind what the prose of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Browne, would have been, had they written under the good without the bad influences of that French precision, which has polished and attenuated, trimmed and impoverished all modern languages ; made

our meaning clear, and too often shallow as well as clear."

Finally, as Shakspeare is to be considered as the greater nature of the two, so on the other hand we must admit him to have been the less cultivated, and much the more careless. What Shakspeare *could* have done we nowhere discover. A careless mortal, open to the Universe and its influences, not caring strenuously to open himself ; who, Prometheus-like, will scale Heaven (if it so must be), and is satisfied if he therewith pay the rent of his London Playhouse ; who, had the Warwickshire Justice let him hunt deer unmolested, might, for many years more, have lived quiet on the green earth without such aerial journeys : an unparalleled mortal. In the great Goethe, again, we see a man through life at his utmost strain ; a man who, as he says himself, "struggled toughly ;" laid hold of all things, under all aspects, scientific or poetic ; engaged passionately with the deepest interests of man's existence, in the most complex age of man's history. What Shakspeare's thoughts on "God, Nature, Art," would have been, especially had he lived to number fourscore years, were curious to know : Goethe's, delivered in many-toned melody, as the apocalypse of our era, are here for us to know.

Such was the noble talent entrusted to this man ; such the noble employment he made thereof. We can call him, once more, "a clear and universal man ;" we can say that, in his universality, as thinker, as singer, as worker, he lived a life of antique nobleness under these new conditions ; and, in so living, is alone in all Europe ; the foremost, whom others are to learn from and follow. In which great act, or rather great sum-total of many acts, who shall compute what treasure of new strengthening, of faith become hope and vision, lies secured for all ! The question, Can man still live in devoutness, yet without blindness or contraction ; in unconquerable stedfastness for the right, yet without tumultuous exasperation against the wrong ; as an

antique worthy, yet with the expansion and increased endowment of a modern? is no longer a question, but has become a certainty, and ocularly-visible fact.

We have looked at Goethe, as we engaged to do, "on *this* side," and with the eyes of "this generation," that is to say, chiefly as a world-changer, and benignant spiritual revolutionist: for in our present so astonishing condition of "progress of the species," such is the category under which we must try all things, wisdom itself. And, indeed, under this aspect too, Goethe's Life and Works are doubtless of incalculable value, and worthy our most earnest study: for his Spiritual History is, as it were, the ideal emblem of all true men's in these days; the goal of Manhood, which he attained, we too in our degree have to aim at; let us mark well the road he fashioned for himself, and in the dim weltering chaos rejoice to find a paved way. \* \* \*

Nevertheless it is nowise alone on this revolutionary or "progress-of-the-species" side that Goethe has significance; his Life and Work is no painted show but a solid reality, and may be looked at with profit on all sides, from all imaginable points of view. Perennial, as a possession forever, Goethe's History and Writings abide there; a thousand-voiced "Melody of Wisdom," which he that has ears may hear. What the experience of the most complexly-situated, deep-searching, everyway *far-experienced* man has yielded him of insight, lies written for all men here. He who was of compass to know and feel more than any other man, this is the record of his knowledge and feeling. "The deepest heart, the highest head to scan," was not beyond his faculty; thus, then, did he scan and interpret: let many generations listen, according to their want; let the generation which has no need of listening, and nothing new to learn there, esteem itself a happy one.

To us, meanwhile, to all that wander in darkness and seek light, as the one thing needful, be this possession reckoned among our choicest blessings and distinctions. *Colite talem virum*; learn of him, imitate, emulate him! So did he catch the Music of the Universe, and unfold

it into clearness, and in authentic celestial tones bring home to the hearts of men, from amid that soul-confusing Babylonish hubbub of this our new Tower-of-Babel era! For now too, as in that old time, had men said to themselves: Come, let us build a tower which shall reach to heaven; and by our steam-engines, and logic-engines, and skilful mechanism and manipulation, vanquish not only Physical Nature, but the divine Spirit of Nature, and scale the empyrean itself. Wherefore they must needs again be stricken with confusion of tongues (or of printing-presses); and *dispersed*,—to other work; wherein also, let us hope, their hammers and trowels shall better avail them.—

Of Goethe, with a feeling such as can be due to no other man, we now take farewell. *Vixit, vivit.*

## BIOGRAPHY

[Holding the view he did of the value of great men, Carlyle necessarily attributed great importance to the biographer's task. History, he says, is "but the essence of innumerable biographies," and in biography the great essential is veracity. The passages here given are from an article on "Biography" which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1832, and a review of Lockhart's *Life of Scott* written for the *London and Westminster Review* in 1838.]

MAN'S sociality of nature evinces itself, in spite of all that can be said, with abundant evidence by this one fact, were there no other : the unspeakable delight he takes in Biography. It is written, "The proper study of mankind is man ;" to which study, let us candidly admit, he, by true or by false methods, applies himself, nothing loth. "Man is perennially interesting to man; nay, if we look strictly to it, there is nothing else interesting." How inexpressibly comfortable to know our fellow-creature; to see into him, understand his goings-forth, decipher the whole heart of his mystery: nay, not only to see into him, but even to see out of him, to view the world altogether as he views it; so that we can theoretically construe him, and could almost practically personate him; and do now thoroughly discern both what manner of man he is, and what manner of thing he has got to work on and live on!

A scientific interest and a poetic one alike inspire us in this matter. A scientific : because every mortal has a Problem of Existence set before him, which, were it only, what for the most it is, the Problem of keeping soul and body together, must be to a certain extent *original*, unlike every other; and yet, at the same time, so *like* every other; like our own, therefore; instructive, moreover, since we also are indentured to *live*.

A poetic interest still more: for precisely this same struggle of human Freewill against material Necessity, which every man's Life, by the mere circumstance that the man continues alive, will more or less victoriously exhibit,—is that which above all else, or rather inclusive of all else, calls the Sympathy of mortal hearts into action; and whether as acted, or as represented and written of, not only is Poetry, but is the sole Poetry possible. Borne onwards by which two all-embracing interests, may the earnest Lover of Biography expand himself on all sides, and indefinitely enrich himself. Looking with the eyes of every new neighbour, he can discern a new world different for each: feeling with the heart of every neighbour, he lives with every neighbour's life, even as with his own. Of these millions of living men, each individual is a mirror to us; a mirror both scientific and poetic; or, if you will, both natural and magical;—from which one would so gladly draw aside the gauze veil; and, peering therein, discern the image of his own natural face, and the supernatural secrets that prophetically lie under the same!

Observe, accordingly, to what extent, in the actual course of things, this business of Biography is practised and relished. Define to thyself, judicious Reader, the real significance of these phenomena, named Gossip, Egoism, Personal Narrative (miraculous or not), Scandal, Raillery, Slander, and such like; the sum-total of which (with some fractional addition of a better ingredient, generally too small to be noticeable) constitutes that other grand phenomenon still called "Conversation." Do they not mean wholly: *Biography* and *Autobiography*? Not only in the common Speech of men; but in all Art too, which is or should be the concentrated and conserved essence of what men can speak and show, Biography is almost the one thing needful.

Even in the highest works of Art, our interest, as the critics complain, is too apt to be strongly or even mainly of a Biographic sort. In the Art, we can nowise forget the Artist; while looking on the *Transfiguration*,

while studying the *Iliad*, we ever strive to figure to ourselves what spirit dwelt in Raphael; what a head was that of Homer, wherein, woven of Elysian light and Tartarean gloom, that old world fashioned itself together, of which these written Greek characters are but a feeble though perennial copy. The Painter and the Singer are present to us; we partially and for the time become the very Painter and the very Singer, while we enjoy the Picture and the Song. Perhaps too, let the critic say what he will, this is the highest enjoyment, the clearest recognition, we can have of these. Art indeed is Art; yet Man also is Man. Had the *Transfiguration* been painted without human hand; had it grown merely on the canvas, say by atmospheric influences, as lichen-pictures do on rocks,—it were a grand Picture doubtless, yet nothing like so grand as the Picture, which, on opening our eyes, we everywhere in Heaven and in Earth see painted; and everywhere pass over with indifference,—because the Painter was not a Man. Think of this; much lies in it. The Vatican is great; yet poor to Chimborazo or the Peak of Teneriffe: its dome is but a foolish Big-endian or Little-endian chip of an egg-shell, compared with that star-fretted Dome where Arcturus and Orion glance forever; which latter, notwithstanding, who looks at, save perhaps some necessitous stargazer bent to make Almanacs; some thick-quilted watchman, to see what weather it will prove? The Biographic interest is wanting: no Michael Angelo was He who built that “Temple of Immensity;” therefore do we, pitiful Littlenesses as we are, turn rather to wonder and to worship in the little toybox of a Temple built by our like. \* \* \*

Again, consider the whole class of Fictitious Narratives; from the highest category of epic or dramatic Poetry, in Shakspeare and Homer, down to the lowest of froth Prose, in the Fashionable Novel. What are all these but so many mimic Biographies? Attempts, here by an inspired Speaker, there by an uninspired Babbler, to deliver himself, more or less

ineffectually, of the grand secret wherewith all hearts labour oppressed : The significance of Man's Life ;—which deliverance, even as traced in the unfurnished head, and printed at the Minerva Press, finds readers. For, observe, though there is *a* greatest Fool, as a superlative in every kind ; and *the* most Foolish man in the Earth is now indubitably living and breathing, and did this morning or lately eat breakfast, and is even now digesting the same ; and looks out on the world, with his dim horn-eyes, and inwardly forms some unspeakable theory thereof : yet where shall the authentically Existing be personally met with ! Can one of us, otherwise than by guess, know that we have got sight of him, have orally communed with him ? To take even the narrower sphere of this our English Metropolis, can any one confidently say to himself, that he has conversed with the identical, individual Stupidest man now extant in London ? No one. Deep as we dive in the Profound, there is ever a new depth opens : where the ultimate bottom may lie, through what new scenes of being we must pass before reaching it (except that we know it does lie somewhere, and might by human faculty and opportunity be reached), is altogether a mystery to us. Strange, tantalising pursuit ! We have the fullest assurance, not only that there is a Stupidest of London men actually resident, with bed and board of some kind, in London ; but that several persons have been or perhaps are now speaking face to face with him : while for us, chase it as we may, such scientific blessedness will too probably be forever denied !—But the thing we meant to enforce was this comfortable fact, that no known Head was so wooden, but there might be other heads to which it were a genius and Friar Bacon's Oracle. Of no given Book, not even of a Fashionable Novel, can you predicate with certainty that its vacuity is absolute ; that there are not other vacuities which shall partially replenish themselves therefrom, and esteem it a *plenum*. How knowest thou, may the distressed Novelwright exclaim, that I, here where I sit, am the Foolishest of existing

mortals ; that this my Long-ear of a Fictitious Biography shall not find one and the other, into whose still longer ears it may be the means, under Providence, of instilling somewhat ? We answer, None knows, none can certainly know : therefore, write on, worthy Brother, even as thou canst, even as it has been given thee. \* \* \*

How delicate, decent is English Biography, bless its mealy mouth ! A Damocles' sword of *Respectability* hangs forever over the poor English Life-writer (as it does over poor English Life in general), and reduces him to the verge of paralysis. Thus it has been said, "there are no English lives worth reading except those of Players, who by the nature of the case have bidden Respectability good-day." The English biographer has long felt that if in writing his Man's Biography, he wrote down anything that could by possibility offend any man, he had written wrong. The plain consequence was, that, properly speaking, no biography whatever could be produced. The poor biographer, having the fear *not* of God before his eyes, was obliged to retire as it were into vacuum ; and write in the most melancholy, straitened manner, with only vacuum for a result. Vain that he wrote, and that we kept reading volume on volume : there was no biography, but some vague ghost of a biography, white, stainless ; without feature or substance ; *vacuum*, as we say, and wind and shadow,—which indeed the material of it was.

No man lives without jostling and being jostled ; in all ways he has to *elbow* himself through the world, giving and receiving offence. His life is a battle, in so far as it is an entity at all. The very oyster, we suppose, comes in collision with oysters : undoubtedly enough it does come in collision with Necessity and Difficulty ; and helps itself through, not as a perfect ideal oyster, but as an imperfect real one. Some kind of remorse must be known to the oyster ; certain hatreds, certain pusillanimities. But as for man, his conflict is continual with the spirit of contradiction, that is without and within ; with the evil spirit (or call it, with the weak,

most necessitous, pitiable spirit), that is in others and in himself. His walk, like all walking (say the mechanicians), is a series of *falls*. To paint man's life is to represent these things. Let them be represented, fitly, with dignity and measure ; but above all, let them be represented. No tragedy of *Hamlet* with the part of Hamlet omitted by particular desire ! No ghost of a biography, let the Damocles' sword of Respectability (which, after all, is but a pasteboard one) threaten as it will ! One hopes that the public taste is much mended in this matter ; that vacuum-biographies, with a good many other vacuities related to them, are withdrawn or withdrawing into vacuum.

## BOSWELL

[A comparison between the portraits of Boswell drawn by Macaulay and Carlyle shows how much greater was Carlyle's penetration and insight. Macaulay's brilliant though superficial characterisation long held the field, but Carlyle's juster estimate has been accepted by nearly every writer who has succeeded him. The essay from which the extracts are taken was first published in *Fraser's Magazine* (May 1832).]

WE have next a word to say of James Boswell. Boswell has already been much commented upon ; but rather in the way of censure and vituperation, than of true recognition. He was a man that brought himself much before the world ; confessed that he eagerly coveted fame, or if that were not possible, notoriety ; of which latter as he gained far more than seemed his due, the public were incited, not only by their natural love of scandal, but by a special ground of envy, to say whatever ill of him could be said. Out of the fifteen millions that then lived, and had bed and board, in the British Islands, this man has provided us a greater *pleasure* than any other individual, at whose cost we now enjoy ourselves ; perhaps has done us a greater *service* than can be specially attributed to more than two or three : yet, ungrateful that we are, no written or spoken eulogy of James Boswell anywhere exists ; his recompense in solid pudding (so far as copyright went) was not excessive ; and as for the empty praise, it has altogether been denied him. Men are unwiser than children ; they do *not* know the hand that feeds them.

Boswell was a person whose mean or bad qualities lay open to the general eye ; visible, palpable to the dullest. His good qualities, again, belonged not to the Time he lived in ; were far from common then ; indeed, in such

a degree, were almost unexampled ; not recognisable therefore by every one ; nay, apt even (so strange had they grown) to be confounded with the very vices they lay contiguous to, and had sprung out of. That he was a wine-bibber and gross liver ; gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character, is undeniable enough. That he was vain, heedless, a babbler ; had much of the sycophant, alternating with the braggadocio, curiously spiced too with an all-pervading dash of the coxcomb ; that he gloried much when the Tailor, by a court-suit, had made a new man of him ; that he appeared at the Shakspeare Jubilee with a riband, imprinted "CORSICA BOSWELL," round his hat ; and in short, if you will, lived no day of his life without doing and saying more than one pretentious ineptitude : all this unhappily is evident as the sun at noon. The very look of Boswell seems to have signified so much. In that cocked nose, cocked partly in triumph over his weaker fellow-creatures, partly to snuff up the smell of coming pleasure, and scent it from afar ; in those bag-cheeks, hanging like half-filled wine-skins, still able to contain more ; in that coarsely protruded shelf-mouth, that fat dewlapped chin ; in all this, who sees not sensuality, pretension, boisterous imbecility enough ; much that could not have been ornamental in the temper of a great man's overfed great man (what the Scotch name *flunkey*), though it had been more natural there ? The under part of Boswell's face is of a low, almost brutish character.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, what great and genuine good lay in him was nowise so self-evident. That Boswell was a hunter after spiritual Notabilities, that he loved such, and longed, and even crept and crawled to be near them ; that he first (in old Touchwood Auchinleck's phraseology) "took on with Paoli ;" and then being off with "the Corsican landlouper," took on with a schoolmaster, "ane that kepted a schule, and ca'd it an academy ;" that he did all this, and could not help doing it, we account a very singular merit. The man, once for all, had an "open sense," an open loving

heart, which so few have : where Excellence existed, he was compelled to acknowledge it ; was drawn towards it, and (let the old sulphur-brand of a Laird say what he liked) *could not but* walk with it,—if not as superior, if not as equal, then as inferior and lackey, better so than not at all. If we reflect now that this love of Excellence had not only such an evil *nature* to triumph over ; but also what an *education* and social position withstood it and weighed it down, its innate strength, victorious over all these things, may astonish us. Consider what an inward impulse there must have been, how many mountains of impediment hurled aside, before the Scottish Laird could, as humble servant, embrace the knees (the bosom was not permitted him) of the English Dominie ! Your Scottish Laird, says an English naturalist of these days, may be defined as the hungriest and vainest of all bipeds yet known. Boswell too was a Tory ; of quite peculiarly feudal, genealogical, pragmatical temper ; had been nurtured in an atmosphere of Heraldry, at the feet of a very Gamaliel in that kind ; within bare walls, adorned only with pedigrees, amid serving-men in threadbare livery ; all things teaching him, from birth upwards, to remember that a Laird was a Laird. Perhaps there was a special vanity in his very blood : old Auchinleck had, if not the gay, tail-spreading, peacock vanity of his son, no little of the slow-stalking, contentious, hissing vanity of the gander ; a still more fatal species. Scottish Advocates will yet tell you how the ancient man, having chanced to be the first sheriff appointed (after the abolition of "hereditary jurisdictions") by royal authority, was wont, in dull-snuffing pompous tone, to preface many a deliverance from the bench with these words : "I, the first King's Sheriff in Scotland."

And now behold the worthy Bozzy, so prepossessed and held back by nature and by art, fly nevertheless like iron to its magnet, whither his better genius called ! You may surround the iron and the magnet with what enclosures and encumbrances you please,—with wood, with rubbish, with brass : it matters not, the two feel

each other, they struggle restlessly towards each other, they *will* be together. The iron may be a Scottish squirelet, full of gulosity and “gigmanity”;<sup>1</sup> the magnet an English plebeian, and moving rag-and-dust mountain, coarse, proud, irascible, imperious: nevertheless, behold how they embrace, and inseparably cleave to one another! It is one of the strangest phenomena of the past century, that at a time when the old reverent feeling of Discipleship (such as brought men from far countries, with rich gifts, and prostrate soul, to the feet of the Prophets) had passed utterly away from men’s practical experience, and was no longer surmised to exist (as it does), perennial, indestructible, in man’s inmost heart,—James Boswell should have been the individual, of all others, predestined to recall it, in such singular guise, to the wondering, and, for a long while, laughing and unrecognising world. It has been commonly said, The man’s vulgar vanity was all that attached him to Johnson; he delighted to be seen near him, to be thought connected with him. Now let it be at once granted that no consideration springing out of vulgar vanity could well be absent from the mind of James Boswell, in this his intercourse with Johnson, or in any considerable transaction of his life. At the same time, ask yourself: Whether such vanity, and nothing else, actuated him therein; whether this was the true essence and moving principle of the phenomenon, or not rather its outward vesture, and the accidental environment (and defacement) in which it came to light? The man was, by nature and habit, vain; a sycophant-coxcomb, be it granted: but had there been nothing more than vanity in him, was Samuel Johnson the man of men to whom he must attach himself? At the date when Johnson was a poor rusty-coated “scholar,” dwelling in Temple-lane, and indeed throughout their whole intercourse afterwards, were there not

<sup>1</sup> “Q. What do you mean by ‘respectable?’—A. He always kept a gig.” (*Thurteil’s Trial.*)—“Thus,” it has been said, “does society naturally divide itself into four classes: Noblemen, Gentlemen, Gigmen, and Men.”

chancellors and prime ministers enough; graceful gentlemen, the glass of fashion; honour-giving noblemen; dinner-giving rich men; renowned fire-eaters, swordsmen, gownsmen; Quacks and Realities of all hues,—any one of whom bulked much larger in the world's eye than Johnson ever did? To any one of whom, by half that submissiveness and assiduity, our Bozzy might have recommended himself; and sat there, the envy of surrounding lickspittles; pocketing now solid emolument, swallowing now well-cooked viands and wines of rich vintage; in each case, also, shone on by some glittering reflex of Renown or Notoriety, so as to be the observed of innumerable observers. To no one of whom, however, though otherwise a most diligent solicitor and purveyor, did he so attach himself: such vulgar courtierships were his paid drudgery, or leisure amusement; the worship of Johnson was his grand, ideal, voluntary business. Does not the frothy-hearted yet enthusiastic man, dosing his Advocate's-wig, regularly take post, and hurry up to London, for the sake of his Sage chiefly; as to a Feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbath of his whole year? The plate-licker and wine-bibber dives into Bolt Court, to sip muddy coffee with a cynical old man, and a sourtempered blind old woman (feeling the cups, whether they are full, with her finger); and patiently endures contradictions without end; too happy so he may but be allowed to listen and live. Nay, it does not appear that vulgar vanity could ever have been much flattered by Boswell's relation to Johnson. Mr. Croker says, Johnson was, to the last, little regarded by the great world; from which, for a vulgar vanity, all honour, as from its fountain, descends. Bozzy, even among Johnson's friends and special admirers, seems rather to have been laughed at than envied: his officious, whisking, consequential ways, the daily reproofs and rebuffs he underwent, could gain from the world no golden but only leaden opinions. His devout Discipleship seemed nothing more than a mean Spanielship, in the general eye. His mighty "constellation," or

sun, round whom he, as satellite, observantly gyrated, was, for the mass of men, but a huge ill-snuffed tallow-light, and he a weak night-moth, circling foolishly, dangerously about it, not knowing what he wanted. If he enjoyed Highland dinners and toasts, as henchman to a new sort of chieftain, Henry Erskine, in the domestic "Outer-house," could hand him a shilling "for the sight of his Bear." Doubtless the man was laughed at, and often heard himself laughed at for his Johnsonism. To be envied is the grand and sole aim of vulgar vanity ; to be filled with good things is that of sensuality : for Johnson perhaps no man living *envied* poor Bozzy ; and of good things (except himself paid for them) there was no vestige in that acquaintanceship. Had nothing other or better than vanity and sensuality been there, Johnson and Boswell had never come together, or had soon and finally separated again. \* \* \*

Consider too, with what force, diligence and vivacity he has rendered back all this which, in Johnson's neighbourhood, his "open sense" had so eagerly and freely taken in. That loose-flowing, careless-looking Work of his is as a picture by one of Nature's own Artists ; the best possible resemblance of a Reality ; like the very image thereof in a clear mirror. Which indeed it was : let but the mirror be *clear*, this is the great point ; the picture must and will be genuine. How the babbling Bozzy, inspired only by love, and the recognition and vision which love can lend, epitomises nightly the words of Wisdom, the deeds and aspects of Wisdom, and so, by little and little, unconsciously works together for us a whole *Johnsoniad* ; a more free, perfect, sunlit and spirit-speaking likeness, than for many centuries had been drawn by man of man ! Scarcely since the days of Homer has the feat been equalled ; indeed, in many senses, this also is a kind of Heroic Poem. The fit *Odyssey* of our unheroic age was to be written, not sung ; of a Thinker, not of a Fighter ; and (for want of a Homer) by the first open soul that might offer,—looked such even through the organs of a Boswell. We do the man's intellectual endowment

great wrong, if we measure it by its mere logical outcome ; though here too, there is not wanting a light ingenuity, a figurativeness and fanciful sport, with glimpses of insight far deeper than the common. But Boswell's grand intellectual talent was, as such ever is, an *unconscious* one, of far higher reach and significance than Logic ; and showed itself in the whole, not in parts. Here again we have that old saying verified, "The heart sees farther than the head." \* \* \*

Boswell wrote a good Book because he had a heart and an eye to discern Wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth ; because of his free insight, his lively talent, above all, of his Love and childlike Open-mindedness. His sneaking sycophancies, his greediness and forwardness, whatever was bestial and earthy in him, are so many blemishes in his Book, which still disturb us in its clearness ; wholly hindrances, not helps. Towards Johnson, however, his feeling was not Sycophancy, which is the lowest, but Reverence, which is the highest of human feelings. None but a reverent man (which so unspeakably few are) could have found his way from Boswell's environment to Johnson's : if such worship for real God-made superiors showed itself also as worship for apparent Tailor-made superiors, even as hollow interested mouth-worship for such,—the case, in this composite human nature of ours, was not miraculous, the more was the pity ! But for ourselves, let every one of us cling to this last article of Faith, and know it as the beginning of all knowledge worth the name : That neither James Boswell's good Book, nor any other good thing, in any time or in any place, was, is or can be performed by any man in virtue of his *badness*, but always and solely in spite thereof.

As for the Book itself, questionless the universal favour entertained for it is well merited. In worth as a Book we have rated it beyond any other product of the eighteenth century : all Johnson's own Writings, laborious and in their kind genuine above most, stand on a quite inferior level to it ; already, indeed, they are becoming obsolete for this generation ; and for some

future generation may be valuable chiefly as Prolegomena and expository Scholia to this *Johnsoniad* of Boswell. Which of us but remembers, as one of the sunny spots in his existence, the day when he opened these airy volumes, fascinating him by a true natural magic ! It was as if the curtains of the Past were drawn aside, and we looked mysteriously into a kindred country, where dwelt our Fathers ; inexpressibly dear to us, but which had seemed forever hidden from our eyes. For the dead Night had engulfed it ; all was gone, vanished as if it had not been. Nevertheless, wondrously given back to us, there once more it lay ; all bright, lucid, blooming ; a little island of Creation amid the circumambient Void. There it still lies ; more like a thing stationary, imperishable, over which changeful Time were now accumulating itself in vain, and could not, any longer, harm it, or hide it. \* \* \*

Rough Samuel and sleek wheedling James *were*, and *are not*. Their Life and whole personal Environment has melted into air. The Mitre Tavern still stands in Fleet Street : but where now is its scot-and-lot paying, beef-and-ale loving, cocked-hatted, pot-bellied Landlord ; its rosy-faced assiduous Landlady, with all her shining brass-pans, waxed tables, well-filled larder-shelves ; her cooks, and bootjacks, and errand-boys, and watery-mouthed hangers-on ? Gone ! Gone ! The becking Waiter who, with wreathed smiles, was wont to spread for Samuel and Bozzy their supper of the gods, has long since pocketed his last sixpence ; and vanished, sixpences and all, like a ghost at cock-crowing. The Bottles they drank out of are all broken, the Chairs they sat on all rotted and burnt ; the very Knives and Forks they ate with have rusted to the heart, and become brown oxide of iron, and mingled with the indiscriminate clay. All, all has vanished ; in very deed and truth, like that baseless fabric of Prospero's air-vision. Of the Mitre Tavern nothing but the bare walls remain there : of London, of England, of the World, nothing but the bare walls remain ; and these also decaying (were they of adamant), only slower. The mysterious River of

Existence rushes on : a new Billow thereof has arrived, and lashes wildly as ever round the old embankments ; but the former Billow with *its* loud, mad eddyings, where is it ?—Where !—Now this Book of Boswell's, this is precisely a revocation of the edict of Destiny ; so that Time shall not utterly, not so soon by several centuries, have dominion over us. A little row of Naphtha-lamps, with its line of Naphtha-light, burns clear and holy through the dead Night of the Past : they who are gone are still here ; though hidden they are revealed, though dead they yet speak. There it shines, that little miraculously lamplit Pathway ; shedding its feebler and feebler twilight into the boundless dark Oblivion,—for all that our Johnson *touched* has become illuminated for us ; on which miraculous little Pathway we can still travel, and see wonders.

## THE DIAMOND NECKLACE

[The *Diamond Necklace*, writes Froude, “which in my opinion is the very finest illustration of Carlyle’s literary power, had been refused in its first form by the editor of the *Foreign Quarterly*.” It was accepted, though reluctantly, by *Fraser’s Magazine* and published in 1837. It is a fitting proem to the *French Revolution* which appeared the same year, worthy of comparison with that wonderful book in humour, dramatic intensity, commanding diction, and graphic force.]

### I

#### AGE OF ROMANCE

(CHAPTER I)

THE Age of Romance has not ceased ; it never ceases ; it does not, if we will think of it, so much as very sensibly decline. “The passions are repressed by social forms ; great passions no longer show themselves ?” Why, there are passions still great enough to replenish Bedlam, for it never wants a tenant ; to suspend men from bed-posts, from improved-drops at the west end of Newgate. A passion that explosively shivers asunder the Life it took rise in, ought to be regarded as considerable : more no passion, in the highest heyday of Romance, yet did. The passions, by grace of the Supernal and also of the Infernal Powers (for both have a hand in it), can never fail us.

And then, as to “social forms,” be it granted that they are of the most buckram quality, and bind men up into the pitifullest straitlaced commonplace existence,—you ask, Where is the Romance ? In the Scotch way one answers, Where is it not ? That very spectacle of an Immortal Nature, with faculties and destiny extending through Eternity, hampered and bandaged up, by

nurses, pedagogues, posturemasters, and the tongues of innumerable old women (named "force of public opinion"); by prejudice, custom, want of knowledge, want of money, want of strength, into, say, the meagre Pattern-Figure that, in these days, meets you in all thoroughfares: a "god-created Man," all but abnegating the character of Man; forced to exist, automatized, mummy-wise (scarcely in rare moments audible or visible from amid his wrappings and cerements), as Gentleman or Gigman;<sup>1</sup> and so selling his birthright of Eternity for the three daily meals, poor at best, which Time yields:—is not this spectacle itself highly romantic, tragical, if we had eyes to look at it? The high-born, (highest-born, for he came out of Heaven) lies drowning in the despicablest puddles; the priceless gift of Life, which he can have but *once*, for he waited a whole Eternity to be born, and now has a whole Eternity waiting to see what he will do when born,—*this* priceless gift we see strangled slowly out of him by innumerable packthreads; and there remains of the glorious Possibility, which we fondly named Man, nothing but an inanimate mass of foul loss and disappointment, which we wrap in shrouds and bury underground,—surely with well-merited tears. To the Thinker here lies Tragedy enough; the epitome and marrow of all Tragedy whatsoever.

But so few are Thinkers? Ay, Reader, so few think; there is the rub! Not one in the thousand has the smallest turn for thinking; only for passive dreaming and hearsaying, and active babbling by rote. Of the eyes that men do glare withal so few can *see*. Thus is the world become such a fearful confused Treadmill, and each man's task has got entangled in his neighbour's, and pulls it awry; and the Spirit of Blindness, Falsehood and Distraction, justly named the Devil, continually maintains himself among us; and even hopes (were it not for the Opposition, which by God's

<sup>1</sup> "I always considered him a respectable man.—What do you mean by respectable? He kept a Gig."—*Thurtell's Trial*.

grace will also maintain itself) to become supreme. Thus too, among other things, has the Romance of Life gone wholly out of sight: and all History, degenerating into empty invoice-lists of Pitched Battles and Changes of Ministry; or, still worse, into "Constitutional History," or "Philosophy of History," or "Philosophy teaching by Experience," is become dead, as the Almanacs of other years,—to which species of composition, indeed, it bears, in several points of view, no inconsiderable affinity.

"Of all blinds that shut-up men's vision," says one, "the worst is Self." How true! How doubly true, if Self, assuming her cunningest, yet miserablest disguise, come on us, in never-ceasing, all-obscur ing reflexes from the innumerable Selves of others; not as Pride, not even as real Hunger, but only as Vanity, and the shadow of an imaginary Hunger for Applause; under the name of what we call "Respectability!" Alas now for our Historian: to his other spiritual deadness (which however, so long as he physically breathes, cannot be considered *complete*) this sad new magic influence is added! Henceforth his Histories must all be screwed up into the "dignity of History." Instead of looking fixedly at the *Thing*, and first of all, and beyond all, endeavouring to *see* it, and fashion a living Picture of it, not a wretched politico-metaphysical Abstraction of it, he has now quite other matters to look to. The *Thing* lies shrouded, invisible, in thousand-fold hallucinations, and foreign air-images: What did the Whigs say of it? What did the Tories? The Priests? The Freethinkers? Above all, What will my own listening circle say of *me* for what I say of it? And then his Respectability in general, as a literary gentleman; his not despicable talent for philosophy! Thus is our poor Historian's faculty directed mainly on two objects: the Writing and the Writer, both of which are quite extraneous; and the *Thing* written-of fares as we see. Can it be wonderful that Histories, wherein open lying is not permitted, are unromantic? Nay, our very Biographies, how stiff-starched, foisonless,

hollow! They stand there respectable; and—what more? Dumb idols; with a skin of delusively painted wax-work; inwardly empty, or full of rags and bran. In our England especially, which in these days is become the chosen land of Respectability, Life-writing has dwindled to the sorrowfullest condition; it requires a man to be some disrespectful, ridiculous Boswell before he can write a tolerable Life. Thus too, strangely enough, the only Lives worth reading are those of Players, emptiest and poorest of the sons of Adam; who nevertheless were sons of his, and brothers of ours; and by the nature of the case, had already bidden Respectability good-day. Such bounties, in this as in infinitely deeper matters, does Respectability shower down on us. Sad are thy doings, O *Gig*; sadder than those of Juggernaut's Car: that, with huge wheel, suddenly crushes asunder the bodies of men; thou, in thy light-bobbing Long-Acre springs, gradually winnowest away their souls!

Depend upon it, for one thing, good Reader, no age ever seemed the Age of Romance to *itself*. Charlemagne, let the Poets talk as they will, had his own provocations in the world: what with selling of his poultry and pot-herbs, what with wanton daughters carrying secretaries through the snow; and, for instance, that hanging of the Saxons over the Weser-bridge (four thousand of them, they say, at one bout), it seems to me that the Great Charles had his temper ruffled at times. Roland of Roncesvalles too, we see well in thinking of it, found rainy weather as well as sunny; knew what it was to have hose need darning; got tough beef to chew, or even went dinnerless; was saddle-sick, calumniated, constipated (as his madness too clearly indicates); and oftenest felt, I doubt not, that this was a very Devil's world, and he, Roland himself, one of the sorriest caitiffs there. Only in long subsequent days, when the tough beef, the constipation and the calumny had clean vanished, did it all begin to seem Romantic, and your Turpins and Ariostos found music in it. So, I say, is it *ever!* And the more, as your true hero, your true

Roland, is ever *unconscious* that he is a hero: this is a condition of all greatness.

In our own poor Nineteenth Century, the Writer of these lines has been fortunate enough to see not a few glimpses of Romance; he imagines this Nineteenth is hardly a whit less romantic than that Ninth, or any other, since centuries began. Apart from Napoleon, and the Dantons, and Mirabeaus, whose fire-words of public speaking, and fire-whirlwinds of cannon and musketry, which for a season darkened the air, are perhaps at bottom but superficial phenomena, he has witnessed, in remotest places, much that could be called romantic, even miraculous. He has witnessed overhead the infinite Deep, with greater and lesser lights, bright-rolling, silent-beaming, hurled forth by the Hand of God: around him and under his feet, the wonderfullest Earth, with her winter snowstorms and her summer spice-airs; and, unaccountablest of all, *himself* standing there. He stood in the lapse of Time; he saw Eternity behind him, and before him. The all-encircling mysterious tide of FORCE, thousandfold (for from force of Thought to force of Gravitation what an interval!) billowed shoreless on; bore him too along with it,—he too was part of it. From its bosom rose and vanished, in perpetual change, the lordliest Real-Phantasmagory, which men name *Being*; and ever anew rose and vanished; and ever that lordliest many-coloured scene was full, another yet the same. Oak-trees fell, young acorns sprang: Men too, new-sent from the Unknown, he met, of tiniest size, who waxed into stature, into strength of sinew, passionate fire and light: in other men the light was growing dim, the sinews all feeble; they sank, motionless, into ashes, into invisibility; returned *back* to the Unknown, beckoning him their mute farewell. He wanders still by the parting-spot; cannot hear *them*; they are far, how far! —It was a sight for angels, and archangels; for, indeed, God himself had made it wholly. One many-glancing asbestos-thread in the Web of Universal-History, spirit-woven, it rustled there, as with the howl

of mighty winds, through that “wild-roaring Loom of Time.” Generation after generation, hundreds of them or thousands of them, from the unknown Beginning, so loud, so stormful-busy rushed torrent-wise, thundering down, down ; and fell all silent,—nothing but some feeble re-echo, which grew ever feebler, struggling up ; and Oblivion swallowed them *all*. Thousands more, to the unknown Ending, will follow: and *thou* here, of this present one, hangest as a drop, still sungilt, on the giddy edge ; one moment, while the Darkness has not yet engulfed thee. O Brother ! is *that* what thou callest prosaic ; of small interest ? Of small interest and for *thee* ? Awake, poor troubled sleeper : shake off thy torpid nightmare-dream ; look, see, behold it, the Flame-image ; splendours high as Heaven, terrors deep as Hell : this is God’s Creation ; this is Man’s Life !—Such things has the Writer of these lines witnessed, in this poor Nineteenth Century of ours ; and what are all such to the things he yet hopes to witness ? Hopes, with truest assurance. “I have painted so much,” said the good Jean Paul, in his old days, “and I have never seen the Ocean ; the Ocean of Eternity I shall not fail to see !”

Such being the intrinsic quality of this Time, and of all Time whatsoever, might not the Poet who chanced to walk through it find objects enough to paint ? What object soever he fixed on, were it the meanest of the mean, let him but paint it in its actual truth, as it swims there, in such environment ; world-old, yet new and never-ending ; an indestructible portion of the miraculous All,—his picture of it were a Poem. How much more if the object fixed on were not mean, but one already wonderful ; the mystic “actual truth” of which, if it lay not on the surface, yet shone through the surface, and invited even Prosaists to search for it !

The present Writer, who unhappily belongs to that class, has nevertheless a firmer and firmer persuasion of two things : first, as was seen, that Romance exists ; secondly, that now, and formerly, and evermore it exists, strictly speaking, in Reality alone. The thing

that *is*, what can be *so* wonderful ; what, especially to us that *are*, can have such significance ? Study Reality, he is ever and anon saying to himself ; search out deeper and deeper *its* quite endless mystery : see it, know it ; then, whether thou wouldest learn from it, and again teach ; or weep over it, or laugh over it, or love it, or despise it, or in any way relate thyself to it, thou hast the firmest enduring basis : *that* hieroglyphic page is one thou canst read on forever, find new meaning in forever.

## II

## THE PARK OF VERSAILLES

(CHAPTER IX)

OR will the reader incline rather, taking the other and sunny side of the matter, to enter that Lamottic-Circean theatrical establishment of Monseigneur de Rohan ; and see there how, under the best of Dramaturgists, Melodrama with sweeping pall flits past him ; while the enchanted Diamond fruit is gradually ripening, to fall by a shake ?

The 28th of July, of this same momentous 1784, has come ; and with it the most rapturous tumult into the heart of Monseigneur. Ineffable expectancy stirs-up his whole soul, with the much that lies therein, from its lowest foundations : borne on wild seas to Armida Islands, yet as is fit, through Horror dim-hovering round, he tumultuously rocks. To the Château, to the Park ! This night the Queen will meet thee, the Queen herself : so far has our tutelary Countess brought it. What can ministerial impediments, Polignac intrigues, avail against the favour, nay—Heaven and Earth !—perhaps the tenderness of a Queen ? She vanishes from amid their meshwork of Etiquette and Cabal ; descends from her celestial Zodiac, to thee a shepherd of Latmos. Alas, a white-bearded pursy shepherd, fat and scant of breath ! Who can account for the taste of females ? But thou, burnish-up thy whole faculties of gallantry,

thy fifty-years' experience of the sex ; this night, or never !—In such unutterable meditations does Monseigneur restlessly spend the day ; and long for darkness, yet dread it.

Darkness has at length come. The perpendicular rows of Heyducs, in that Palais or Hôtel de Strasbourg, are all cast prostrate in sleep ; the very Concierge resupine, with open mouth, audibly drinks-in nepenthe ; when Monseigneur, “in blue greatcoat, with slouched hat,” issues softly, with his henchman Planta of the Grisons, to the Park of Versailles. Planta must loiter invisible in the distance ; Slouched-hat will wait here, among the leafy thickets ; till our tutelary Countess, “in black domino,” announce the moment, which surely must be near.

The night is of the darkest for the season ; no Moon ; warm, slumbering July, in motionless clouds, drops fatness over the Earth. The very stars from Zenith see not Monseigneur ; see only his and the world's cloud-covering, fringed with twilight in the far North. Midnight, telling itself forth from these shadowy Palace Domes ? All the steeples of Versailles, the villages around, with metal tongue, and huge Paris itself dull-droning, answer drowsily, Yes ! Sleep rules this Hemisphere of the World. From Arctic to Antarctic, the Life of our Earth lies all, in long swaths, or rows (like those rows of Heyducs and snoring Concierge), successively mown down, from vertical to horizontal, by Sleep ! Rather curious to consider.

The flowers are all asleep in Little Trianon, the roses folded in for the night ; but the Rose of Roses still wakes. O wondrous Earth ! O doubly wondrous Park of Versailles, with Little and Great Trianon,—and a scarce-breathing Monseigneur ! Ye Hydraulics of Lenôtre, that also slumber, with stop-cocks, in your deep leaden chambers, babble not of *him*, when ye arise. Ye odorous balm-shrubs, huge spectral Cedars, thou sacred Boscage of Hornbeam, ye dim Pavilions of the Peerless, whisper not ! Moon, lie silent, hidden in thy vacant cave ; no star look down : let neither Heaven

nor Hell peep through the blanket of the Night, to cry, Hold, Hold!—The Black Domino? Ha! Yes!—With stouter step than might have been expected, Monseigneur is under way; the Black Domino had only to whisper, low and eager: “In the Hornbeam Arbour!” And now, Cardinal, O now!—Yes, there hovers the white Celestial; “in white robe of *linon moucheté*,” finer than moonshine; a Juno by her bearing: there, in that bosket! Monseigneur, down on thy knees; never can red breeches be better wasted. Oh, he would kiss the royal shoe-tie, or its shadow if there were one: not words; only broken gaspings, murmuring prostrations, eloquently speak his meaning. But, ah, behold! Our tutelary Black Domino, in haste, with vehement whisper: “*On vient.*” The white Juno drops a fairest Rose, with these evermemorable words, “*Vous savez ce que cela veut dire*, You know what that means;” vanishes in the thickets, the Black Domino hurrying her with eager whisper of “*Vite, vite, Away, away!*” for the sound of footsteps (doubtless from Madame, and Madame d’Artois, unwelcome sisters that they are!) is approaching fast. Monseigneur picks-up his Rose; runs as for the King’s plate, almost overturns poor Planta, whose laugh assures him that all is safe.

O Ixion de Rohan, happiest mortal of this world, since the first Ixion, of deathless memory,—who nevertheless, in that cloud-embbrace, begat strange Centaurs! Thou art Prime Minister of France without peradventure: is not this the Rose of Royalty, worthy to become ottar of roses, and yield perfume forever? How thou, of all people, wilt contrive to govern France, in these very peculiar times—But that is little to the matter. There, doubtless, is thy Rose (which, methinks, it were well to have a Box or Casket made for): nay, was there not in the dulcet of thy Juno’s “*Vous savez*” a kind of trepidation, a quaver—as of still deeper meanings!

## THE OPERA

[The characteristic paper on "The Opera" was written for *The Keepsake* for 1852, an annual conducted by Carlyle's friend Procter (Barry Cornwall).]

OF the Haymarket Opera my account, in fine, is this: Lustres, candelabras, painting, gilding at discretion; a hall as of the Caliph Alraschid, or him that commanded the slaves of the Lamp; a hall as if fitted-up by the genii, regardless of expense. Upholstery, and the outlay of human capital, could do no more. Artists, too, as they are called, have been got together from the ends of the world, regardless likewise of expense, to do dancing and singing, some of them even geniuses in their craft. One singer in particular, called Coletti or some such name, seemed to me, by the east of his face, by the tones of his voice, by his general bearing, so far as I could read it, to be a man of deep and ardent sensibilities, of delicate intuitions, just sympathies; originally an almost poetic soul, or man of *genius*, as we term it; stamped by Nature as capable of far other work than squalling here, like a blind Samson, to make the Philistines sport!

Nay, all of them had aptitudes, perhaps of a distinguished kind; and must, by their own and other people's labour, have got a training equal or superior in toilsomeness, earnest assiduity, and patient travail, to what breeds men to the most arduous trades. I speak not of kings, grandees, or the like show-figures; but few soldiers, judges, men of letters, can have had such pains taken with them. The very ballet-girls, with their muslin saucers round them, were perhaps little short of miraculous; whirling and spinning there in strange mad

vortexes, and then suddenly fixing themselves motionless, each upon her left or right great toe, with the other leg stretched out at an angle of ninety degrees,—as if you had suddenly pricked into the floor, by one of their points, a pair, or rather a multitudinous cohort, of mad restlessly jumping and clipping scissors, and so bidden them rest, with opened blades, and stand still, in the Devil's name ! A truly notable motion ; marvellous, almost miraculous, were not the people there so used to it. Motion peculiar to the Opera ; perhaps the ugliest, and surely one of the most difficult, ever taught a female creature in this world. Nature abhors it ; but Art does at least admit it to border on the impossible. One little Cerito, or Taglioni the Second, that night when I was there, went bounding from the floor as if she had been made of India-rubber, or filled with hydrogen gas, and inclined by positive levity to bolt through the ceiling ; perhaps neither Semiramis nor Catherine the Second had bred herself so carefully.

Such talent, and such martyrdom of training, gathered from the four winds, was now here, to do its feat and be paid for it. Regardless of expense, indeed ! The purse of Fortunatus seemed to have opened itself, and the divine art of Musical Sound and Rhythmic Motion was welcome with an explosion of all the magnificences which the other arts, fine and coarse, could achieve. For you are to think of some Rossini or Bellini in the rear of it, too : to say nothing of the Stanfields, and hosts of scene-painters, machinists, engineers, enterprisers ;—fit to have taken Gibraltar, written the History of England, or reduced Ireland into Industrial Regiments, had they so set their minds to it !

Alas, and of all these notable or noticeable human talents, and excellent perseverances and energies, backed by mountains of wealth, and led by the divine art of Music and Rhythm vouchsafed by Heaven to them and us, what was to be the issue here this evening ? An hour's amusement, not amusing either, but wearisome and dreary, to a high-dizened select populace of male and female persons, who seemed to me not much

worth amusing ! Could any one have pealed into their hearts once, one true thought, and glimpse of Self-vision : "High-dizened, most expensive persons, Aristocracy so-called, or *Best of the World*, beware, beware what proofs you are given here of betterness and bestness !" And then the salutary pang of conscience in reply : "A select populace, with money in its purse, and drilled a little by the posture-master : good Heavens ! if that were what, here and everywhere in God's Creation, *I am* ? And a world all dying because I am, and show myself to be, and to have long been, even that ? John, the carriage, the carriage ; swift ! Let me go home in silence, to reflection, perhaps to sackcloth and ashes !" This, and not amusement, would have profited those high-dizened persons.

Amusement, at any rate, they did not get from Euterpe and Melpomene. These two Muses, sent-for regardless of expense, I could see, were but the vehicle of a kind of service which I judged to be Paphian rather. Young beauties of both sexes used their opera-glasses, you could notice, not entirely for looking at the stage. And, it must be owned, the light, in this explosion of all the upholsteries, and the human fine arts and coarse, was magical ; and made your fair one an Armida,—if you liked her better so. Nay, certain old Improper-Females (of quality), in their rouge and jewels, even these looked some *reminiscence* of enchantment ; and I saw this and the other lean domestic Dandy, with icy smile on his old worn face ; this and the other Marquis Chatabagues, Prince Mahogany, or the like foreign Dignitary, tripping into the boxes of said females, grinning there awhile, with dyed moustachios and macassar-oil graciosity, and then tripping out again ;—and, in fact, I perceived that Coletti and Cerito and the Rhythmic Arts were a mere accompaniment here.

Wonderful to see ; and sad, if you had eyes ! Do but think of it. Cleopatra threw pearls into her drink, in mere waste ; which was reckoned foolish of her. But here had the Modern Aristocracy of men brought the

divinest of its Arts, heavenly Music itself ; and, piling all the upholsteries and ingenuities that other human art could do, had lighted them into a bonfire to illuminate an hour's flirtation of Chatabagues, Mahogany, and these improper persons ! Never in Nature had I seen such waste before. O Coletti, you whose inborn melody, once of kindred, as I judged, to "the Melodies Eternal," might have valiantly weeded-out this and the other false thing from the ways of men, and made a bit of God's Creation more melodious,—they have purchased you away from that ; chained you to the wheel of Prince Mahogany's chariot, and here you make sport for a macassar Chatabagues and his improper-females past the prime of life ! Wretched spiritual Nigger, oh, if you *had* some genius, and were not a born Nigger with mere appetite for pumpkin, should you have endured such a lot ? I lament for you beyond all other expenses. Other expenses are light ; you are the Cleopatra's pearl that should not have been flung into Mahogany's claret-cup. And Rossini, too, and Mozart and Bellini—Oh Heavens ! when I think that Music too is condemned to be mad, and to burn herself, to this end, on such a funeral pile,—your celestial Opera-house grows dark and infernal to me ! Behind its glitter stalks the shadow of Eternal Death ; through it too, I look not "up into the divine eye," as Richter has it, "but down into the bottomless eye-socket"—not up towards God, Heaven, and the Throne of Truth, but too truly down toward Falsity, Vacuity, and the dwelling-place of Everlasting Despair. \* \* \*

Good sirs, surely I by no means expect the Opera will abolish itself this year or the next. But if you ask me, Why heroes are not born now, why heroisms are not done now ? I will answer you : It is a world all calculated for strangling of heroisms. At every ingress into life, the genius of the world lies in wait for heroisms, and by seduction or compulsion unweariedly does its utmost to pervert them or extinguish them. Yes ; to its Hells of sweating tailors, distressed needlewomen and the like, this Opera of yours is the

appropriate Heaven! Of a truth, if you will read a Psalm of Asaph till you understand it, and then come hither and hear the Rossini-and-Coletti Psalm, you will find the ages have altered a good deal.

Nor do I wish all men to become Psalmist Asaphs and fanatic Hebrews. Far other is my wish; far other, and wider, is now my notion of this Universe. Populations of stern faces, stern as any Hebrew, but capable withal of bursting into inextinguishable laughter on occasion:—do you understand that new and better form of character? Laughter also, if it come from the heart, is a heavenly thing. But, at least and lowest, I would have you a Population abhorring phantasms;—abhorring *unveracity* in all things; and in your “amusements,” which are voluntary and not compulsory things, abhorring it most impatiently of all.

## THE MAN OF LETTERS

### I

#### FROM THE LIFE OF SCHILLER

IF to know wisdom were to practise it ; if fame brought true dignity and peace of mind ; or happiness consisted in nourishing the intellect with its appropriate food, and surrounding the imagination with ideal beauty, a literary life would be the most enviable which the lot of this world affords. But the truth is far otherwise. The Man of Letters has no immutable, all-conquering volition, more than other men ; to understand and to perform are two very different things with him as with every one. His fame rarely exerts a favourable influence on his dignity of character, and never on his peace of mind : its glitter is external, for the eyes of others ; within, it is but the ailment of unrest, the oil cast upon the ever-gnawing fire of ambition, quickening into fresh vehemence the blaze which it stills for a moment. Moreover, this Man of Letters is not wholly made of spirit, but of clay and spirit mixed : his thinking faculties may be nobly trained and exercised, but he must have affections as well as thoughts to make him happy, and food and raiment must be given him or he dies. Far from being the most enviable, his way of life is perhaps, among the many modes by which an ardent mind endeavours to express its activity, the most thickly beset with suffering and degradation. Look at the biography of authors ! Except the Newgate Calendar, it is the most sickening chapter in the history of man. The calamities of these

people are a fertile topic ; and too often their faults and vices have kept pace with their calamities. Nor is it difficult to see how this has happened. Talent of any sort is generally accompanied with a peculiar fineness of sensibility ; of genius this is the most essential constituent ; and life in any shape has sorrows enough for hearts so formed. The employments of literature sharpen this natural tendency ; the vexations that accompany them frequently exasperate it into morbid soreness. The cares and toils of literature are the business of life ; its delights are too ethereal and too transient to furnish that perennial flow of satisfaction, coarse, but plenteous and substantial, of which happiness in this world of ours is made. The most finished efforts of the mind give it little pleasure, frequently they give it pain ; for men's aims are ever far beyond their strength. And the outward recompense of these undertakings, the distinction they confer, is of still smaller value : the desire for it is insatiable even when successful ; and when baffled, it issues in jealousy and envy, and every pitiful and painful feeling. So keen a temperament with so little to restrain or satisfy, so much to distress or tempt it, produces contradictions which few are adequate to reconcile. Hence the unhappiness of literary men, hence their faults and follies.

Thus literature is apt to form a dangerous and discontenting occupation even for the amateur. But for him whose rank and worldly comforts depend on it, who does not live to write, but writes to live, its difficulties and perils are fearfully increased. Few spectacles are more afflicting than that of such a man, so gifted and so fated, so jostled and tossed to and fro in the rude bustle of life, the buffettings of which he is so little fitted to endure. Cherishing, it may be, the loftiest thoughts, and clogged with the meanest wants ; of pure and holy purposes, yet ever driven from the straight path by the pressure of necessity, or the impulse of passion ; thirsting for glory, and frequently in want of daily bread ; hovering between the empyrean of his fancy and the squalid desert of reality ; cramped

and foiled in his most strenuous exertions ; dissatisfied with his best performances, disgusted with his fortune, this Man of Letters too often spends his weary days in conflicts with obscure misery : harassed, chagrined, debased, or maddened ; the victim at once of tragedy and farce ; the last forlorn outpost in the war of Mind against Matter. Many are the noble souls that have perished bitterly, with their tasks unfinished, under these corroding woes ! Some in utter famine, like Otway ; some in dark insanity, like Cowper and Collins ; some, like Chatterton, have sought out a more stern quietus, and turning their indignant steps away from a world which refused them welcome, have taken refuge in that strong Fortress, where poverty and cold neglect, and the thousand natural shocks which flesh is heir to, could not reach them any more.

Yet among these men are to be found the brightest specimens and the chief benefactors of mankind ! It is they that kept awake the finer parts of our souls ; that give us better aims than power or pleasure, and withstand the total sovereignty of Mammon in this earth. They are the vanguard in the march of mind ; the intellectual Backwoodsmen, reclaiming from the idle wilderness new territories for the thought and the activity of their happier brethren. Pity that from all their conquests, so rich in benefit to others, themselves should reap so little ! But it is vain to murmur. They are volunteers in this cause ; they weighed the charms of it against the perils : and they must abide the results of their decision, as all must. The hardships of the course they follow are formidable, but not all inevitable ; and to such as pursue it rightly, it is not without its great rewards. If an author's life is more agitated and more painful than that of others, it may also be made more spirit stirring and exalted : fortune may render him unhappy : it is only himself that can make him despicable. The history of genius has, in fact, its bright side as well as its dark. And if it is distressing to survey the misery, and what is worse, the debasement of so many gifted men, it is doubly cheering

on the other hand to reflect on the few, who, amid the temptations and sorrows to which life in all its provinces and most in theirs is liable, have travelled through it in calm and virtuous majesty, and are now hallowed in our memories, not less for their conduct than their writings. Such men are the flower of this lower world: to such alone can this epithet of great be applied with its true emphasis. There is a congruity in their proceedings which one loves to contemplate: "he who would write heroic poems, should make his whole life a heroic poem."

So thought our Milton; and, what was more difficult, he acted so. To Milton, the moral king of authors, a heroic multitude, out of many ages and countries, might be joined; a "cloud of witnesses," that encompass the true literary man throughout his pilgrimage, inspiring him to lofty emulation, cheering his solitary thoughts with hope, teaching him to struggle, to endure, to conquer difficulties, or, in failure and heavy sufferings, to

. . . . . "arm th' obdured breast  
With stubborn patience as with triple steel."

## II

### FROM HEROES AND HERO WORSHIP

FICHTE the German Philosopher delivered, some forty years ago at Erlangen, a highly remarkable Course of Lectures on this subject: "*Ueber das Wesen des Gelehrten*, On the Nature of the Literary Man." Fichte, in conformity with the Transcendental Philosophy, of which he was a distinguished teacher, declares first: That all things which we see or work with in this Earth, especially we ourselves and all persons, are as a kind of vesture or sensuous Appearance: that under all there lies, of the essence of them, what he calls the "Divine Idea of the World;" this is the Reality which "lies at the bottom of all Appearance." To the mass of men no such Divine Idea is recognisable in the world; they live merely, says Fichte, among the superficialities,

practicalities and shows of the world, not dreaming that there is anything divine under them. But the Man of Letters is sent hither specially that he may discern for himself, and make manifest to us, this same Divine Idea : in every new generation it will manifest itself in a new dialect ; and he is there for the purpose of doing that. Such is Fichte's phraseology ; with which we need not quarrel. It is his way of naming what I here, by other words, am striving imperfectly to name ; what there is at present no name for : The unspeakable Divine Significance, full of splendour, of wonder and terror, that lies in the being of every man, of every thing,—the Presence of the God who made every man and thing. Mahomet taught this in his dialect ; Odin in his : it is the thing which all thinking hearts, in one dialect or another, are here to teach. Fichte calls the Man of Letters, therefore, a Prophet, or as he prefers to phrase it, a Priest, continually unfolding the Godlike to men : Men of Letters are a perpetual Priesthood, from age to age, teaching all men that a God is still present in their life ; that all "Appearance," whatsoever we see in the world, is but as a vesture for the "Divine Idea of the World," for "that which lies at the bottom of Appearance." In the true Literary Man there is thus ever, acknowledged or not by the world, a sacredness : he is the light of the world ; the world's Priest ;—guiding it, like a sacred Pillar of Fire, in its dark pilgrimage through the waste of Time. Fichte discriminates with sharp zeal the *true* Literary Man, what we here call the *Hero* as Man of Letters, from multitudes of false unheroic. Whoever lives not wholly in this Divine Idea, or living partially in it, struggles not, as for the one good, to live wholly in it,—he is, let him live where else he like, in what pomps and prosperities he like, no Literary Man ; he is, says Fichte, a "Bungler, *Stümper*." Or at best, if he belong to the prosaic provinces, he may be a "Hodman ;" Fichte even calls him elsewhere a "Nonentity," and has in short no mercy for him, no wish that he should continue happy among us ! This is Fichte's notion of the Man of Letters.

## SARTOR RESARTUS

[*Sartor Resartus* is Carlyle's most characteristic book. It contains the germs of all his future teaching and is the first work in which he gave expression to his matured opinion regarding the great problems that henceforth engaged his attention until his death. The book was written between January and August 1831, and, after having been refused by Longman, Murray, and several other publishers, it was accepted by *Fraser's Magazine* at half the usual rate of payment. The volume was not published by Saunders and Otley until 1838, when Carlyle's reputation had been made by *The French Revolution*, and then only on a guarantee from friends willing to take the risk of loss. It professes to be an account by an English editor of a remarkable work *Die Kleider, ihr Werden und Wirken* ("Clothes, their Origin and Influence"), which had lately appeared in Germany. Its author Diogenes von Teufelsdröckh (Devil's-dung), Professor of Things in General at Weissnichtwo (Nobody-knows-where), has formulated a philosophy of clothes under cover of which Carlyle is able to express his views upon modern society, its evils, and the mode of curing them. *Sartor Resartus* is in its essentials autobiographical.

Such passages as "The Everlasting No," "Centre of Indifference," and the "Everlasting Yea," are pictures of different stages in his spiritual progress.]

### I

## TEUFELSDRÖCKH IS ALONE WITH THE STARS

(BOOK I, CHAPTER III)

To the Editor of these sheets, as to a young enthusiastic Englishman, however unworthy, Teufelsdröckh opened himself perhaps more than to the most. Pity only that we could not then half guess his importance, and scrutinise him with due power of vision! We enjoyed, what not three men in Weissnichtwo could boast of, a certain degree of access to the Professor's private domicile. It

was the attic floor of the highest house in the Wahngasse ; and might truly be called the pinnacle of Weissnichtwo, for it rose sheer up above the contiguous roofs, themselves rising from elevated ground. Moreover, with its windows, it looked towards all the four *Orte*, or as the Scotch say, and we ought to say, *Airts*: the Sitting-room itself commanded three ; another came to view in the *Schlafgemach* (Bed-room) at the opposite end ; to say nothing of the Kitchen, which offered two, as it were, *duplicates*, and showing nothing new. So that it was in fact the speculum or watch-tower of Teufelsdröckh ; wherefrom, sitting at ease, he might see the whole life-circulation of that considerable City ; the streets and lanes of which, with all their doing and driving (*Thun und Treiben*), were for the most part visible there.

“I look down into all that wasp-nest or bee-hive,” have we heard him say, “and witness their wax-laying and honey-making, and poison-brewing, and choking by sulphur. From the Palace esplanade, where music plays while Serene Highness is pleased to eat his victuals, down the low lane, where in her door-sill the aged widow, knitting for a thin livelihood, sits to feel the afternoon sun, I see it all ; for, except the Schlosskirche weathercock, no biped stands so high. Couriers arrive bestrapped and bebooted, bearing Joy and Sorrow bagged-up in pouches of leather : there, topladen, and with four swift horses, rolls-in the country Baron and his household ; here, on timber-leg, the lamed Soldier hops painfully along, begging alms : a thousand carriages, and wains, and cars, come tumbling-in with Food, with young Rusticity, and other Raw Produce, inanimate or animate, and go tumbling out again with Produce manufactured. That living flood, pouring through these streets, of all qualities and ages, knowest thou whence it is coming, whither it is going ? *Aus der Ewigkeit, zu der Ewigkeit hin* : From Eternity, onwards to Eternity ! These are Apparitions : what else ? Are they not Souls rendered visible : in Bodies that took shape and will lose it, melting into air ? Their solid Pavement is a Picture of the

Sense ; they walk on the bosom of Nothing, blank Time is behind them and before them. Or fanciest thou, the red and yellow Clothes-screen yonder, with spurs on its heels and feather in its crown, is but of Today, without a Yesterday or a Tomorrow ; and had not rather its Ancestor alive when Hengst and Horsa overran thy Island ? Friend, thou seest here a living link in that Tissue of History, which inweaves all Being ; watch well, or it will be past thee, and seen no more."

"*Ach, mein Lieber !*" said he once, at midnight, when we had returned from the Coffee-house in rather earnest talk, it is a true "sublimity to dwell here. These fringes of lamplight, struggling-up through smoke and thousand-fold exhalation, some fathoms into the ancient reign of Night, what thinks Boötes of them, as he leads his Hunting-Dogs over the Zenith in their leash of sidereal fire ? That stifled hum of Midnight, when Traffic has lain down to rest ; and the chariot-wheels of Vanity, still rolling here and there through distant streets, are bearing her to Halls roofed-in, and lighted to the due pitch for her ; and only Vice and Misery, to prowl or to moan like nightbirds, are abroad : that hum, I say, like the stertorous, unquiet slumber of sick Life, is heard in Heaven ! Oh, under that hideous coverlet of vapours, and putrefactions, and unimaginable gases, what a Fermenting-vat lies simmering and hid ! The joyful and the sorrowful are there ; men are dying there, men are being born ; men are praying,—on the other side of a brick partition, men are cursing ; and around them all is the vast, void Night. The proud Grandee still lingers in his perfumed saloons or reposes within damask curtains ; Wretchedness cowers into truckle-beds, or shivers hunger-stricken into its lair of straw : in obscure cellars, *Rouge-et-Noir* languidly emits its voice-of-destiny to haggard hungry Villains ; while Councillors of State sit plotting, and playing their high chess-game, whereof the pawns are Men. The Lover whispers his mistress that the coach is ready ; and she, full of hope and fear, glides down,

to fly with him over the borders : the Thief, still more silently, sets-to his picklocks and crow-bars, or lurks in wait till the watchmen first snore in their boxes. Gay mansions, with supper-rooms and dancing-rooms, are full of light and music and high-swelling hearts ; but, in the Condemned Cells, the pulse of life beats tremulous and faint, and bloodshot eyes look-out through the darkness, which is around and within, for the light of a stern last morning. Six men are to be hanged on the morrow : comes no hammering from the *Rabenstein* ?—their gallows must even now be o' building. Upwards of five-hundred-thousand two-legged animals without feathers lie round us, in horizontal position ; their heads all in nightcaps, and full of the foolishest dreams. Riot cries aloud, and staggers and swaggers in his rank dens of shame ; and the Mother, with streaming hair, kneels over her pallid dying infant, whose cracked lips only ~~her~~ tears now moisten.—All these heaped and huddled together, with nothing but a little carpentry and masonry between them ;—crammed-in, like salted fish, in their barrel ;—or weltering, shall I say, like an Egyptian pitcher of tamed Vipers, each struggling to get its *head above* the others : *such* work goes on under that smoke-counterpane !—But I, *mein Werther*, sit above it all ; I am alone with the Stars.”

## II

## THE EVERLASTING NO

(BOOK II, CHAPTER VII)

To such readers as have reflected, what can be called reflecting, on man's life, and happily discovered, in contradiction to much Profit-and-Loss Philosophy, speculative and practical, that Soul is *not* synonymous with Stomach ; who understand, therefore, in our Friend's words, “that, for man's well-being, Faith is properly the one thing needful ; how, with it, Martyrs, otherwise weak, can cheerfully endure the shame and

the cross, and, without it, Worldlings puke-up their sick existence, by suicide, in the midst of luxury :" to such it will be clear that, for a pure moral nature, the loss of his religious Belief was the loss of everything. Unhappy young man ! All wounds, the crush of long-continued Destitution, the stab of false Friendship, and of false Love, all wounds in thy so genial heart, would have healed again, had not its life-warmth been withdrawn. Well might he exclaim, in his wild way : " Is there no God, then ; but at best an absentee God, sitting idle, ever since the first Sabbath, at the outside of his Universe, and *seeing it go*? Has the word Duty no meaning ; is what we call Duty no divine Messenger and Guide, but a false earthly Fantasm, made-up of Desire and Fear, of emanations from the Gallows and from Dr. Graham's Celestial-Bed ? Happiness of an approving Conscience ! Did not Paul of Tarsus, whom admiring men have since named Saint, feel that *he* was 'the chief of sinners ;' and Nero of Rome, jocund in spirit, (*wohlgemuth*), spend much of his time in fiddling ? Foolish Word-monger and Motive-grinder, who in thy Logic-mill hath an earthly mechanism for the God-like itself, and wouldest fain grind me out Virtue from the husks of Pleasure,—I tell thee, Nay ! To the unregenerate Prometheus Vinctus of a man, it is ever the bitterest aggravation of his wretchedness that he is conscious of Virtue, that he feels himself the victim not of suffering only, but of injustice. What then ? Is the heroic inspiration we name Virtue but some Passion ; some bubble of the blood, bubbling in the direction others *profit* by ? I know not : only this I know, If what thou namest Happiness be our true aim, then are we all astray. With Stupidity and sound Digestion man may front much. But what, in these dull unimaginative days, are the terrors of Conscience to the diseases of the Liver ! Not on Morality, but on Cookery, let us build our stronghold : there brandishing our frying-pan, as censer, let us offer sweet incense to the Devil, and live at ease on the fat things *he* has provided for his Elect ! "

Thus has the bewildered Wanderer to stand, as so many have done, shouting question after question into the Sibyl-cave of Destiny, and receive no Answer but an Echo. It is all a grim Desert, this once-fair world of his ; wherein is heard only the howling of wild-beasts, or the shrieks of despairing, hate-filled men ; and no Pillar of Cloud by day, and no Pillar of Fire by night, any longer guides the Pilgrim. To such length has the spirit of Inquiry carried him. “ But what boots it (*was that's?*) ? ” cries he : “ it is but the common lot in this era. Not having come to spiritual majority prior to the *Siècle de Louis Quinze*, and not being born purely a Loghead (*Dummkopf*), thou hadst no other outlook. The whole world is, like thee, sold to Unbelief ; their old Temples of the Godhead, which for long have not been rainproof, crumble down ; and men ask now : Where is the Godhead ; our eyes never saw him ? ”

Pitiful enough were it, for all these wild utterances, to call our Diogenes wicked. Unprofitable servants as we all are, perhaps at no era of his life was he more decisively the Servant of Goodness, the Servant of God, than even now when doubting God's existence. “ One circumstance I note,” says he : “ after all the nameless woe that Inquiry, which for me, what it is not always, was genuine Love of Truth, had wrought me, I nevertheless still loved Truth, and would bate no jot of my allegiance to her. ‘ Truth ! ’ I cried, ‘ though the Heavens crush me for following her : no Falsehood ! though a whole celestial Lubberland were the price of Apostasy.’ In conduct it was the same. Had a divine Messenger from the clouds, or miraculous Handwriting on the wall, convincingly proclaimed to me *This thou shalt do*, with what passionate readiness, as I often thought, would I have done it, had it been leaping into the infernal Fire. Thus, in spite of all Motive-grinders, and Mechanical Profit-and-Loss Philosophies, with the sick ophthalmia and hallucination they had brought on, was the Infinite nature of Duty still dimly present to me : living without God in the world, of God's light I was not utterly bereft ; if my as yet sealed eyes, with their unspeakable

longing, could nowhere see Him, nevertheless in my heart He was present, and His heaven-written Law still stood legible and sacred there."

Meanwhile, under all these tribulations, and temporal and spiritual destitutions, what must the Wanderer, in his silent soul, have endured! "The painfullest feeling," writes he, "is that of your own Feebleness (*Unkraft*) ; ever, as the English Milton says, to be weak is the true misery. And yet of your Strength there is and can be no clear feeling, save by what you have prospered in, by what you have done. Between vague wavering Capability and fixed indubitable Performance, what a difference! A certain inarticulate Self-consciousness dwells dimly in us : which only our Works can render articulate and decisively discernible. Our Works are the mirror wherein the spirit first sees its natural lineaments. Hence, too, the folly of that impossible Precept, *Know thyself* ; till it be translated into this partially possible one, *Know what thou canst work-at*.

"But for me, so strangely unprosperous had I been, the net-result of my Workings amounted as yet simply to—Nothing. How then could I believe in my Strength, when there was as yet no mirror to see it in? Ever did this agitating, yet, as I now perceive, quite frivolous question, remain to me insoluble: Hast thou a certain Faculty, a certain Worth, such even as the most have not ; or art thou the completest Dullard of these modern times? Alas! the fearful Unbelief is unbelief in yourself ; and how could I believe? Had not my first, last Faith in myself, when even to me the Heavens seemed laid open, and I dared to love, been all-too cruelly belied? The speculative Mystery of Life grew ever more mysterious to me: neither in the practical Mystery had I made the slightest progress, but been everywhere buffeted, foiled, and contemptuously cast-out. A feeble unit in the middle of a threatening Infinitude, I seemed to have nothing given me but eyes, whereby to discern my own wretchedness. Invisible yet impenetrable walls, as of Enchantment, divided me from all living : was there, in the wide

world, any true bosom I could press trustfully to mine? O Heaven, No, there was none! I kept a lock upon my lips: why should I speak much with that shifting variety of so-called Friends, in whose withered, vain and too-hungry souls Friendship was but an incredible tradition? In such cases, your resource is to talk little, and that little mostly from the Newspapers. Now when I look back, it was a strange isolation I then lived in. The men and women around me, even speaking with me, were but Figures; I had, practically, forgotten that they were alive, that they were not merely automatic. In midst of their crowded streets, and assemblages, I walked solitary; and (except as it was my own heart, not another's, that I kept devouring) savage also, as the tiger in his jungle. Some comfort it would have been, could I, like a Faust, have fancied myself tempted and tormented of the Devil; for a Hell, as I imagine, without Life, though only diabolic Life, were more frightful: but in our age of Down-pulling and Disbelief, the very Devil has been pulled-down, you cannot so much as believe in a Devil. To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility: it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling-on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb. O the vast, gloomy, solitary Golgotha, and Hill of Death! Why was the Living banished thither—companionless, conscious? Why if there is no Devil; nay, unless the Devil is your God?" \* \* \*

"So had it lasted," concludes the Wanderer, "so had it lasted, as in bitter protracted Death-agony, through long years. The heart within me, unvisited by any heavenly dewdrop, was smouldering in sulphurous, slow-consuming fire. Almost since earliest memory I had shed no tear; or once only when I, murmuring half-audibly, recited Faust's Deathsong, that wild *Selig der den er im Siegesglanze findet* (Happy whom he finds in Battle's splendour), and thought that of this last Friend even I was not forsaken, that Destiny itself could not doom me not to die. Having no hope,

neither had I any definite fear, were it of Man or of Devil : nay, I often felt as if it might be solacing, could the Arch-Devil himself, though in Tartarean terrors, but rise to me, that I might tell him a little of my mind. And yet, strangely enough, I lived in a continual, indefinite, pining fear ; tremulous, pusillanimous, apprehensive of I knew not what : it seemed as if all things in the Heavens above and the Earth beneath would hurt me ; as if the Heavens and the Earth were but boundless jaws of a devouring monster, wherein I, palpitating, waited to be devoured.

“ Full of such humour, and perhaps the miserablest man in the whole French Capital or Suburbs, was I, one sultry Dogday, after much perambulation, toiling along the dirty little *Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfer*, among civic rubbish enough, in a close atmosphere, and over pavements hot as Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace ; whereby doubtless my spirits were little cheered ; when, all at once, there rose a Thought in me, and I asked myself : ‘ What *art* thou afraid of ? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling ? Despicable biped ! what is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee ? Death ? Well, Death ; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee ! Hast thou not a heart ; canst thou not suffer whatso it be ; and, as a Child of Freedom, thou outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee ? Let it come, then ; I will meet it and defy it ! ’ And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul ; and I shook base Fear away from me forever. I was strong, of unknown strength ; a spirit, almost a god. Ever from that time, the temper of my misery was changed : not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance.

“ Thus had the EVERLASTING No (*das ewige Nein*) pealed authoritatively through all the recesses of my Being, of my ME ; and then was it that my whole ME stood-up, in native God-created majesty, and with emphasis recorded its Protest. Such a Protest, the

most important transaction in Life, may that same Indignation and Defiance, in a psychological point of view, be fitly called. The Everlasting No had said : 'Behold, thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's) ;' to which my whole Me now made answer : 'I am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee !'

"It is from this hour that I incline to date my Spiritual New-birth, or Baphometic Fire-baptism ; perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a Man."

### III

#### THE EVERLASTING YEA

(BOOK II, CHAPTER IX)

"THE hot Harmattan-wind had raged itself out ; its howl went silent within me ; and the long-deafened soul could now hear. I paused in my wild wanderings ; and sat me down to wait, and consider ; for it was as if the hour of change drew nigh. I seemed to surrender, to renounce utterly, and say : Fly, then, false shadows of Hope ; I will chase you no more, I will believe you no more. And ye too, haggard spectres of Fear, I care not for you ; ye too are all shadows and a lie. Let me rest here : for I am way-weary and life-weary ; I will rest here, were it but to die : to die or to live is alike to me ; alike insignificant."—And again : "Here, then, as I lay in that CENTRE OF INDIFFERENCE ; cast, doubtless, by benignant upper Influence, into a healing sleep, the heavy dreams rolled gradually away, and I awoke to a new Heaven and a new Earth. The first preliminary moral Act, Annihilation of Self (*Selbst-tötung*), had been happily accomplished ; and my mind's eyes were now unsealed, and its hands ungyved."

Might we not also conjecture that the following passage refers to his Locality, during this same "healing sleep ;" that his Pilgrim-staff lies cast aside here, on "the high table-land ;" and indeed that the repose is already taking wholesome effect on him ? If it were not that

the tone, in some parts, has more of riancy, even of levity, than we could have expected! However, in *Teufelsdröckh*, there is always the strangest Dualism: light dancing, with guitar-music, will be going on in the fore-court, while by fits from within comes the faint whimpering of woe and wail. We transcribe the piece entire :

“ Beautiful it was to sit there, as in my skyey Tent, musing and meditating ; on the high table-land, in front of the Mountains ; over me, as roof, the azure Dome, and around me, for walls, four azure-flowing curtains,—namely, of the Four azure winds, on whose bottom fringes also I have seen gilding. And then to fancy the fair Castles that stood sheltered in these Mountain hollows ; with their green flower lawns, and white dames and damosels, lovely enough : or better still, the straw-roofed Cottages wherein stood many a Mother baking bread, with her children round her :—all hidden and protectingly folded-up in the valley folds ; yet there and alive, as sure as if I beheld them. Or to see, as well as fancy, the nine Towns and Villages, that lay round my mountain-seat, which, in still weather, were wont to speak to me (by their steeple-bells) with metal tongue ; and, in almost all weather, proclaimed their vitality by repeated Smoke-clouds ; whereon, as on a culinary horologe, I might read the hour of the day. For it was the smoke of cookery, as kind housewives at morning, midday, eventide, were boiling their husbands’ kettles ; and ever a blue pillar rose up into the air, successively or simultaneously, from each of the nine, saying, as plainly as smoke could say : Such and such a meal is getting ready here. Not uninteresting ! For you have the whole Borough, with all its love-makings and scandal-mongerries, contentions and contentments, as in miniature, and could cover it all with your hat.—If, in my wide Wayfarings, I had learned to look into the business of the World in its details, here perhaps was the place for combining it into general propositions, and deducing inferences therefrom.

“ Often also could I see the black Tempest marching

in anger through the Distance : round some Schreckhorn, as yet grim-blue, would the eddying vapour gather, and there tumultuously eddy, and flow down like a mad witch's hair ; till, after a space, it vanished, and, in the clear sunbeam, your Schreckhorn stood smiling grim-white, for the vapour had held snow. How thou fermentest and elaboratest, in thy great fermenting-vat and laboratory of an Atmosphere, of a World, O Nature ! —Or what is Nature ? Ha ! why do I not name thee God ? Art thou not the 'Living Garment of God ?' O Heavens, is it, in very deed, HE then that ever speaks through thee ; that lives and loves in thee, that lives and loves in me ?

"Fore-shadows, call them rather fore-splendours, of that Truth, and Beginning of Truths, fell mysteriously over my soul. Sweeter than Dayspring to the Shipwrecked in Nova Zembla ; ah ! like the mother's voice to her little child that strays bewildered, weeping, in unknown tumults ; like soft streamings of celestial music to my too-exasperated heart, came that Evangel. The Universe is not dead and demoniacal, a charnel-house with spectres ; but godlike, and my Father's !

"With other eyes, too, could I now look upon my fellow man ; with an infinite Love, an infinite Pity. Poor, wandering wayward man ! Art thou not tried, and beaten with stripes, even as I am ? Ever, whether thou bear the royal mantle or the beggar's gabardine, art thou not so weary, so heavy-laden ; and thy Bed of Rest is but a Grave. O my Brother, my Brother, why cannot I shelter thee in my bosom, and wipe away all tears from thy eyes ! —Truly, the din of many-voiced Life, which in this solitude, with the mind's organ, I could hear, was no longer a maddening discord, but a melting one ; like inarticulate cries, and sabbings of a dumb creature, which in the ear of Heaven are prayers. The poor Earth, with her poor joys, was now my needy Mother, not my cruel Stepdame ; Man, with his so mad Wants and so mean Endeavours, had become the dearer to me ; and even for his sufferings and his sins, I now first named him Brother. Thus was I standing in the porch

of that 'Sanctuary of Sorrow ;' by strange, steep ways, had I too been guided thither ; and ere long its sacred gates would open, and the 'Divine Depth of Sorrow' lie disclosed to me."

The Professor says, he here first got eye on the Knot that had been strangling him, and straightway could unfasten it, and was free. "A vain interminable controversy," writes he, "touching what is at present called Origin of Evil, or some such thing, arises in every soul, since the beginning of the world ; and in every soul, that would pass from idle Suffering into actual Endeavouring, must first be put an end to. The most, in our time, have to go content with a simple, incomplete-enough Suppression of this controversy ; to a few some Solution of it is indispensable. In every new era, too, such Solution comes out in different terms ; and ever the Solution of the last era has become obsolete, and is found unserviceable. For it is man's nature to change his Dialect from century to century ; he cannot help it though he would. The authentic *Church-Catechism* of our present century has not yet fallen into my hands : meanwhile, for my own private behoof, I attempt to elucidate the matter so. Man's Unhappiness, as I construe, comes of his Greatness ; it is because there is an Infinite in him, which with all his cunning he cannot quite bury under the Finite. Will the whole Finance Ministers and Upholsterers and Confectioners of modern Europe undertake, in joint-stock company, to make one Shoeblack HAPPY ? They cannot accomplish it, above an hour or two ; for the Shoeblack also has a Soul quite other than his Stomach ; and would require, if you consider it, for his permanent satisfaction and saturation, simply this allotment, no more, and no less : *God's infinite Universe altogether to himself*, therein to enjoy infinitely, and fill every wish as fast as it rose. Oceans of Hochheimer, a Throat like that of Ophiuchus : speak not of them ; to the infinite Shoeblack they are as nothing. No sooner is your ocean filled, than he grumbles that it might have been of better vintage. Try him with half of a Universe, of an Omnipotence, he

sets to quarrelling with the proprietor of the other half, and declares himself the most maltreated of men.— Always there is a black spot in our sunshine : it is even, as I said, the *Shadow of Ourselves*. \* \* \*

“I asked myself : What is this that, ever since earliest years, thou hast been fretting and fuming, and lamenting and self-tormenting, on account of ? Say it in a word : is it not because thou art not HAPPY ? Because the THOU (sweet gentleman) is not sufficiently honoured, nourished, soft-bedded, and lovingly cared-for ? Foolish soul ! What Act of Legislature was there that *thou* shouldst be Happy ? A little while ago thou hadst no right to *be* at all. What if thou wert born and predestined not to be Happy, but to be Unhappy ! Art thou nothing other than a Vulture, then, that fliest through the Universe seeking after somewhat to *eat* ; and shrieking dolefully because carrion enough is not given thee ? Close thy *Byron* ; open thy *Goethe*.”

“*Es leuchtet mir ein*, I see a glimpse of it !” cries he elsewhere : there is in man HIGHER than Love of Happiness : he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness ! Was it not to preach-forth this same HIGHER that sages and martyrs, the Poet and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered, bearing testimony, through life and through death, of the Godlike that is in Man, and how in the Godlike only has he Strength and Freedom ? Which God-inspired Doctrine art thou also honoured to be taught ; O Heavens ! and broken with manifold merciful Afflictions, even till thou become contrite, and learn it ! O thank thy Destiny for these : thankfully bear what yet remain : thou hadst need of them ; the Self in thee needed to be annihilated. By benignant fever-paroxysms is Life rooting out the deep-seated chronic Disease, and triumphs over Death. On the roaring billows of Time, thou art not engulfed, but borne aloft into the azure of Eternity. Love not Pleasure, love God. This is the EVERLASTING YEA, wherein all contradiction is solved ; wherein whoso walks and works, it is well within him.” \* \* \*

"To me, in this our life," says the Professor, "which is an internecine warfare with the Time-spirit, other warfare seems questionable. Hast thou in any way a Contention with thy brother, I advise thee, think well what the meaning thereof is. If thou gauge it to the bottom, it is simply this: 'Fellow, see! thou art taking more than thy share of Happiness in the world, something from *my* share: which, by the Heavens, thou shalt not; nay I will fight thee rather.'—Alas! and the whole lot to be divided is such a beggarly matter, truly a 'feast of shells,' for the substance has been spilled out: not enough to quench one appetite; and the collective human species clutching at them!—Can we not, in all such cases, rather say: 'Take it, thou too-ravenous individual; take that pitiful additional fraction of a share, which I reckoned mine, but which thou so wantest; take it with a blessing: would to Heaven I had enough for thee!'"—If Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* be, 'to a certain extent, Applied Christianity,' surely to a still greater extent, so is this. We have here not a Whole Duty of Man, yet a Half Duty, namely the Passive half: could we but do it, as we can demonstrate it!

"But indeed Conviction, were it never so excellent, is worthless till it convert itself into Conduct. Nay properly Conviction is not possible till then; inasmuch as all Speculation is by nature endless, formless, a vortex amid vortices: only by a felt indubitable certainty of Experience does it find any centre to revolve round, and so fashion itself into a system. Most true is it, as a wise man teaches us, that 'Doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by Action.' On which ground, too, let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen into day, lay this other precept well to heart, which to me was of invaluable service: '*Do the Duty which lies nearest thee*,' which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second Duty will already have become clearer.

"May we not say, however, that the hour of Spiritual Enfranchisement is even this: When your Ideal World, wherein the whole man has been dimly strug-

gling and inexpressibly languishing to work, becomes revealed, and thrown open; and you discover, with amazement enough, like the Lothario in *Wilhelm Meister*, that your 'America is here or nowhere'? The Situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal: work it out therefrom; and working, believe, live, be free. Fool! the Ideal is in thyself, the impediment too is in thyself: thy Condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same Ideal out of: what matters whether such stuff be of this sort or that, so the Form thou give it be heroic, be poetic? O thou that pinest in the imprisonment of the Actual, and criest bitterly to the gods for a kingdom wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth: the thing thou seekest is already with thee, 'here or nowhere,' couldst thou only see!

"But it is with man's Soul as it was with Nature: the beginning of Creation is—Light. Till the eye have vision, the whole members are in bonds. Divine moment, when over the tempest-tost Soul, as once over the wild-weltering Chaos, it is spoken: Let there be Light! Ever to the greatest that has felt such moment, is it not miraculous and God-announcing; even as, under simpler figures, to the simplest and least. The mad primeval Discord is hushed; the rudely-jumbled conflicting elements bind themselves into separate Firmaments: deep silent rock-foundations are built beneath; and the skyey vault with its everlasting Luminaries above: instead of a dark wasteful Chaos, we have a blooming, fertile, heaven-encompassed World.

"I too could now say to myself: Be no longer a Chaos, but a World, or even Worldkin. Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called Today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work."

## IV

## HELOTAGE

(BOOK III, CHAPTER IV)

TEUFELSDRÖCKH, as a speculative Radical, has his own notions about human dignity ; that the Zahdarm palaces and courtesies have not made him forgetful of the Futteral cottages. On the blank cover of Heuschrecke's Tract, we find the following indistinctly engrossed :

“ Two men I honour, and no third. First, the toilworn Craftsman that with earth-made Implement laboriously conquers the Earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard Hand ; crooked, coarse ; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the Sceptre of this Planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence ; for it is the face of a Man living manlike. Oh, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee ! Hardly-entreated Brother ! For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed : thou wert our Conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For in thee too lay a god-created Form, but it was not to be unfolded ; encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of Labour : and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom. Yet toil on, toil on : *thou* art in thy duty, be out of it who may ; thou toilst for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread.

“ A second man I honour, and still more highly : Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable ; not daily bread, but the bread of Life. Is not he too in his duty ; endeavouring towards inward Harmony ; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavours, be they high or low ? Highest of all, when his outward and his inward endeavour are one : when we can name him Artist ; not earthly Craftsman only, but inspired Thinker, who with heaven-

made Implement conquers Heaven for us ! If the poor and humble toil that we have Food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he have Light, have Guidance, Freedom, Immortality ?—These two, in all their degrees, I honour : all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth.

“Unspeakably touching is it, however, when I find both dignities united ; and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man’s wants, is also toiling inwardly for the highest. Sublimer in this world know I nothing than a Peasant Saint, could such now anywhere be met with. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself ; thou wilt see the splendour of Heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of Earth, like a light shining in great darkness.”

And again : “It is not because of his toils that I lament for the poor : we must all toil, or steal (howsoever we name our stealing), which is worse ; no faithful workman finds his task a pastime. The poor is hungry and athirst ; but for him also there is food and drink : he is heavy-laden and weary : but for him also the Heavens send Sleep, and of the deepest ; in his smoky cribs, a clear dewy heaven of Rest envelops him, and fitful glitterings of cloud-skirted Dreams. But what I do mourn over is, that the lamp of his soul should go out ; that no ray of heavenly, or even of earthly knowledge should visit him ; but only, in the haggard darkness, like two spectres, Fear and Indignation bear him company. Alas, while the Body stands so broad and brawny, must the Soul lie blinded, dwarfed, stupefied, almost annihilated ! Alas, was this too a Breath of God ; bestowed in Heaven, but on earth never to be unfolded ;—That there should one Man die ignorant who had capacity for Knowledge, this I call a tragedy, were it to happen more than twenty times in the minute, as by some computations it does. The miserable fraction of Science which our united Mankind, in a wide Universe of Nescience, has acquired, why is not this, with all diligence, imparted to all ?”

Quite in an opposite strain is the following : “The

old Spartans had a wiser method ; and went out and hunted-down their Helots, and speared and spitted them when they grew too numerous. With our improved fashions of hunting, Herr Hofrath, now after the invention of fire-arms and standing-armies, how much easier were such a hunt ! Perhaps in the most thickly peopled country, some three days annually might suffice to shoot all the able-bodied Paupers that had accumulated within the year. Let Governments think of this. The expense were trifling : nay, the very carcasses would pay it. Have them salted and barrelled ; could not you victual therewith, if not Army and Navy, yet richly such infirm Paupers, in workhouses and elsewhere, as enlightened Charity, dreading no evil of them, might see good to keep alive ? ”

“ And yet,” writes he farther on, “ there must be something wrong. A full-formed Horse will, in any market, bring from twenty to as high as two-hundred Friedrichs d’or : such is his worth to the world. A full-formed Man is not only worth nothing to the world, but the world could afford him a round sum would he simply engage to go and hang himself. Nevertheless, which of the two was the more cunningly-devised article, even as an Engine ? Good Heavens ! A white European Man, standing on his two Legs, with his two five-fingered Hands at his shackle-bones, and miraculous Head on his shoulders, is worth, I should say, from fifty to a hundred Horses ! ”

“ True, thou Gold-Hofrath,” cries the Professor elsewhere : “ too crowded indeed ! Meanwhile, what portion of this inconsiderable terraqueous Globe have ye actually tilled and delved, till it will grow no more ? How thick stands your Population in the Pampas and Savannas of America ; round ancient Carthage, and in the interior of Africa ; on both slopes of the Altaic chain, in the central Platform of Asia ; in Spain, Greece, Turkey, Crim Tartary, the Curragh of Kildare ? One man, in one year, as I have understood it, if you lend him Earth, will feed himself and nine others. Alas, where now are the Hengsts and Alaries of our still-

glowing, still-expanding Europe ; who, when their home is grown too narrow, will enlist, and, like Fire-pillars, guide onwards those superfluous masses of indomitable living Valour ; equipped, not now with the battle-axe and war-chariot, but with the steam-engine and ploughshare ? Where are they ?—Preserving their Game !”

## V

## NATURAL SUPERNATURALISM

(BOOK III, CHAPTER VIII)

“ DEEP has been, and is, the significance of Miracles,” thus quietly begins the Professor ; “ far deeper perhaps than we imagine. Meanwhile, the question of questions were : What specially is a Miracle ? To that Dutch King of Siam, an icicle had been a miracle ; whoso had carried with him an air-pump, and phial of vitriolic ether, might have worked a miracle. To my Horse again, who unhappily is still more unscientific, do not I work a miracle, and magical ‘ *Open sesame !* ’ every time I please to pay twopence, and open for him an impassable *Schlagbaum*, or shut Turnpike ?

“ ‘ But is not a real Miracle simply a violation of the Laws of Nature ? ’ ask several. Whom I answer by this new question : What are the Laws of Nature ? To me perhaps the rising of one from the dead were no violation of these Laws, but a confirmation ; were some far deeper Law, not first penetrated into, and by Spiritual Force, even as the rest have all been, brought to bear on us with its Material Force.

“ Here too may some inquire, not without astonishment : On what ground shall one, that can make Iron swim, come and declare that therefore he can teach Religion ? To us, truly, of the Nineteenth Century, such declaration were inept enough ; which nevertheless to our fathers, of the First Century, was full of meaning.

“ ‘ But is it not the deepest Law of Nature that she be

constant?' cries an illuminated class: 'Is not the Machine of the Universe fixed to move by unalterable rules?' Probable enough, good friends: nay, I too must believe that the God, whom ancient inspired men assert to be 'without variableness or shadow of turning,' does indeed never change; that Nature, that the Universe, which no one whom it so pleases can be prevented from calling a Machine, does move by the most unalterable rules. And now of you too I make the old inquiry: What those same unalterable rules, forming the complete Statute-Book of Nature, may possibly be?

"They stand written in our Works of Science, say you; in the accumulated records of Man's Experience?—Was Man with his Experience present at the Creation, then, to see how it all went on? Have any deepest scientific individuals yet dived-down to the foundations of the Universe, and gauged everything there? Did the Maker take them into His counsel; that they read His ground plan of the incomprehensible All; and can say, This stands marked therein, and no more than this? Alas, not in anywise! These scientific individuals have been nowhere but where we also are; have seen some handbreadths deeper than we see into the Deep that is infinite, without bottom as without shore.

"Laplace's Book on the Stars, wherein he exhibits that certain Planets, with their Satellites, gyrate round our worthy Sun, at a rate and in a course, which, by greatest good fortune, he and the like of him have succeeded in detecting,—is to me as precious as to another. But is this what thou namest 'Mechanism of the Heavens,' and 'System of the World;' this, wherein Sirius and the Pleiades, and all Herschel's Fifteen-thousand Suns per minute, being left out, some paltry handful of Moons, and inert Balls, had been—looked at, nicknamed, and marked in the Zodiacaal Way-bill; so that we can now prate of their Whereabout; their How, their Why, their What, being hid from us, as in the signless Inane?

"System of Nature! To the wisest man, wide as is

his vision, Nature remains of quite *infinite* depth, of quite infinite expansion ; and all Experience thereof limits itself to some few computed centuries and measured square-miles. The course of Nature's phases, on this our little fraction of a Planet, is partially known to us : but who knows what deeper courses these depend on ; what infinitely larger Cycle (of causes) our little Epicycle revolves on ? To the Minnow every cranny and pebble, and quality and accident, of its little native Creek may have become familiar : but does the Minnow understand the Ocean Tides and periodic Currents, the Trade-winds, and Monsoons, and Moon's Eclipses ; by all which the condition of its little Creek is regulated, and may, from time to time (*unmiraculously* enough), be quite overset and reversed ? Such a minnow is Man ; his Creek this Planet Earth ; his Ocean the immeasurable All ; his Monsoons and periodic Currents the mysterious Course of Providence through *Æons* of *Æons*.

" We speak of the Volume of Nature : and truly a Volume it is,—whose Author and Writer is God. To read it ! Dost thou, does man, so much as well know the Alphabet thereof ? With its Words, Sentences, and grand descriptive Pages, poetical and philosophical, spread-out through Solar Systems, and Thousands of Years, we shall not try thee. It is a Volume written in celestial hieroglyphs, in the true Sacred-writing ; of which even Prophets are happy that they can read here a line and there a line. As for your Institutes, and Academies of Science, they strive bravely ; and, from amid the thick-crowded, inextricably intertwined hieroglyphic writing, pick-out, by dextrous combination, some Letters in the vulgar Character, and therefrom put together this and the other economic Recipe, of high avail in Practice. That Nature is more than some boundless Volume of such Recipes, or huge, well-nigh inexhaustible Domestic-Cookery Book, of which the whole secret will in this manner one day evolve itself, the fewest dream.

"Custom," continues the Professor, "doth make dotards of us all. Consider well, thou wilt find that Custom is the greatest of Weavers ; and weaves air-rament for all the Spirits of the Universe ; whereby indeed these dwell with us visibly, as ministering servants, in our houses and work-shops ; but their spiritual nature becomes, to the most, for ever hidden. Philosophy complains that Custom has hoodwinked us, from the first ; that we do everything by Custom, even Believe by it ; that our very Axioms, let us boast of Free-thinking as we may, are oftenest simply such Beliefs as we have never heard questioned. Nay, what is Philosophy throughout but a continual battle against Custom ; an ever-renewed effort to *transcend* the sphere of blind Custom, and so become Transcendental ?

"Innumerable are the illusions and legerdemain-tricks of Custom : but of all these, perhaps the cleverest is her knack of persuading us that the Miraculous, by simple repetition, ceases to be Miraculous. True, it is by this means we live ; for man must work as well as wonder : and herein is Custom so far a kind nurse, guiding him to his true benefit. But she is a fond foolish nurse, or rather we are false foolish nurselings, when, in our resting and reflecting hours, we prolong the same deception. Am I to view the Stupendous with stupid indifference, because I have seen it twice, or two-hundred, or two-million times ? There is no reason in Nature or in Art why I should : unless, indeed, I am a mere Work-Machine, for whom the divine gift of Thought were no other than the terrestrial gift of Steam is to the Steam-engine ; a power whereby Cotton might be spun, and money and money's worth realised.

"Notable enough too, here as elsewhere, wilt thou find the potency of Names ; which are but one kind of such custom-woven, wonder-hiding Garments. \* \* \*

"Still worse is it with regard to Time. Your grand anti-magician, and universal wonder-hider, is this same lying Time. Had we but the Time-annihilating Hat, to put-on for once only, we should see ourselves in a World of Miracles, wherein all fabled or authentic

Thaumaturgy, and feats of Magic, were outdone. But unhappily we have not such a Hat ; and man, poor fool that he is, can seldom and scantily help himself without one. \* \* \*

“Sweep away the Illusion of Time ; glance, if thou have eyes, from the near moving-cause to its far distant Mover : The stroke that came transmitted through a whole galaxy of elastic balls, was it less a stroke than if the last ball only had been struck, and sent flying ? Oh, could I (with the Time-annihilating Hat) transport thee direct from the Beginnings to the Endings, how were thy eyesight unsealed, and thy heart set flaming in the Light-sea of celestial wonder ! Then sawest thou that this fair Universe, were it in the meanest province thereof, is in very deed the star-domed City of God ; that through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams. But Nature, which is the Time-vesture of God, and reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish.

“Again, could anything be more miraculous than an actual authentic Ghost ? The English Johnson longed, all his life, to see one ; but could not, though he went to Cock Lane, and thence to the church-vaults, and tapped on coffins. Foolish Doctor ! Did he never, with the mind’s eye as well as with the body’s, look round him into that full tide of human Life he so loved ; did he never so much as look into Himself ? The good Doctor was a Ghost, as actual and authentic as heart could wish ; well-nigh a million of Ghosts were travelling the streets by his side. Once more I say, sweep away the illusion of Time ; compress the three-score years into three minutes : what else was he, what else are we ? Are we not Spirits, that are shaped into a body, into an Appearance ; and that fade away again into air and Invisibility ? This is no metaphor, it is a simple scientific *fact* : we start out of Nothingness, take figure, and are Apparitions ; round us, as round the veriest spectre, is Eternity ; and to Eternity minutes are as years and æons. Come there not tones of Love and Faith, as

from celestial harp-strings, like the Song of beatified Souls? And again, do we not squeak and gibber (in our discordant screech-owlish debatings and recriminatings); and glide bodeful, and feeble, and fearful; or uproar (*poltern*), and revel in our mad Dance of the Dead,—till the scent of the morning-air summons us to our still Home; and dreamy Night becomes awake and Day? Where now is Alexander of Macedon: does the steel Host, that yelled in fierce battle-shouts at Issus and Arbela, remain behind him: or have they all vanished utterly, even as perturbed Goblins must? Napoleon too, and his Moscow Retreats and Austerlitz Campaigns! Was it all other than the veriest Spectre-hunt; which has now, with its howling tumult that made Night hideous, flitted away?—Ghosts! There are nigh a thousand-million walking the Earth openly at noon tide; some half-hundred have vanished from it, some half-hundred have arisen in it, ere thy watch ticks once.

“O Heaven, it is mysterious, it is awful to consider that we not only carry each a future Ghost within him; but are, in very deed, Ghosts! These Limbs, whence had we them; this stormy Force; this life-blood with its burning Passion? They are dust and shadow; a Shadow-system gathered round our ME; wherein, through some moments or years, the Divine Essence is to be revealed in the Flesh. That warrior on his strong war-horse, fire flashes through his eyes; force dwells in his arm and heart: but warrior and war-horse are a vision; a revealed Force, nothing more. Stately they tread the Earth, as if it were a firm substance: fool! the Earth is but a film; it cracks in twain, and warrior and war-horse sink beyond plummet’s sounding. Plummet’s? Fantasy herself will not follow them. A little while ago, they were not; a little while, and they are not, their very ashes are not.

So has it been from the beginning, so will it be to the end. Generation after generation takes to itself the Form of a Body, and forth-issuing from Cimmerian Night, on Heaven’s mission APPEARS. What Force

and Fire is in each he expends : one grinding in the mill of Industry ; one hunter-like climbing the giddy Alpine heights of Science ; one madly dashed in pieces on the rocks of Strife, in war with his fellow :—and then the Heaven-sent is recalled ; his earthly Vesture falls away, and soon even to Sense becomes a vanished Shadow. Thus, like some wild-flaming, wild-thundering train of Heaven's Artillery, does this mysterious MANKIND thunder and flame, in long-drawn, quick-succeeding grandeur, through the unknown Deep. Thus, like a God-created, fire-breathing Spirit-host, we emerge from the Inane ; haste stormfully across the astonished Earth ; then plunge again into the Inane. Earth's mountains are levelled, and her seas filled up, in our passage : can the Earth, which is but dead and a vision, resist Spirits which have reality and are alive ? On the hardest adamant some footprint of us is stamped-in ; the last Rear of the host will read traces of the earliest Van. But whence ?—O Heaven, whither ? Sense knows not ; Faith knows not ; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, from God and to God.

*'We are such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little Life  
Is rounded with a sleep !'*"

## THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

[The last sentence of Carlyle's *French Revolution* was written on January 12, 1837, on a damp evening, just as the light was failing. He gave the manuscript to his wife to read, saying, "I know not whether this book is worth anything, nor what the world will do with it, or misdo, or entirely forbear to do, as is likeliest; but this I could tell the world: You have not had for a hundred years any book that comes more direct and flamingly from the heart of a living man." In a letter written to Sterling a few days latter he describes it as "a wild savage book, itself a kind of French Revolution." It is not so much a history as a succession of pictures of the leading characters of the Revolution, and the reader will gain most benefit from it if he has first acquainted himself with the main facts of the history. As a work of art it is generally judged to be Carlyle's highest achievement. "It is a prose poem," says Froude, "with a distinct beginning, a middle, an end. It opens with the crash of a corrupt system, and a dream of liberty which was to bring with it a reign of peace and happiness and universal love. It pursues its way through the failure of visionary hopes into regicide and terror, and the regeneration of mankind by the guillotine. It has been called an *epic*. It is rather an *Æschylean drama* composed of facts literally true, in which the furies are seen once more walking on this prosaic earth and shaking their serpent hair." Its publication established Carlyle's reputation. Henceforth he was sure of at least a hearing and was independent of the fancies of "able editors." The world was constrained to admit that "there had arisen a new star, of baleful perhaps and ominous aspect, but a star of the first magnitude in English literature."]

### I

#### REALISED IDEALS

(VOL. I, BOOK I, CHAPTER II)

Such a changed France have we; and a changed Louis. Changed, truly; and further than thou yet seest!—To the eye of History many things, in that sick-room of Louis, are now visible, which to the Courtiers there present were invisible. For indeed it is

well said, "in every object there is inexhaustible meaning ; the eye sees in it what the eye brings means of seeing." To Newton and to Newton's Dog Diamond, what a different pair of Universes ; while the painting on the optical retina of both was, most likely, the same ! Let the Reader here, in this sick-room of Louis, endeavour to look with the mind too. \* \* \*

Alas, much more lies sick than poor Louis : not the French King only, but the French Kingship ; this too, after long rough tear and wear, is breaking down. The world is all so changed ; so much that seemed vigorous has sunk decrepit, so much that was not is beginning to be !—Borne over the Atlantic, to the closing ear of Louis, King by the Grace of God, what sounds are these ; muffled ominous, new in our centuries ? Boston Harbour is black with unexpected Tea : behold a Pennsylvanian Congress gather ; and ere long, on Bunker Hill, DEMOCRACY announcing, in rifle-volleys death-winged, under her Star Banner, to the tune of Yankee-doodle-doo, that she is born, and, whirlwind-like, will envelope the whole world ! \* \* \*

The Church, which in its palmy season, seven hundred years ago, could make an Emperor wait barefoot, in penance-shirt, three days, in the snow, has for centuries seen itself decaying ; reduced even to forget old purposes and enmities, and join interest with the Kingship : on this younger strength it would fain stay its decrepitude ; and these two will henceforth stand and fall together. Alas, the Sorbonne still sits there, in its old mansion ; but mumbles only jargon of dotage, and no longer leads the consciences of men : not the Sorbonne ; it is *Encyclopédies*, *Philosophie*, and who knows what nameless innumerable multitude of ready Writers, profane Singers, Romancers, Players, Disputators, and Pamphleteers, that now form the Spiritual Guidance of the world. The world's Practical Guidance too is lost, or has glided into the same miscellaneous hands. Who is it that the King (*Ableman*, named also *Roi*, *Rex*, or *Director*) now guides ? His own huntsmen and pricklers : when there is to be no hunt, it is well said, "Le

*Roi ne fera rien* (Today his Majesty will do *nothing*).” He lives and lingers there, because he is living there, and none has yet laid hands on him.

The nobles, in like manner, have nearly ceased either to guide or misguide ; and are now, as their master is, little more than ornamental figures. It is long since they have done with butchering one another or their king : the Workers, protected, encouraged by Majesty, have ages ago built walled towns, and there ply their crafts ; will permit no Robber Baron to “live by the saddle,” but maintain a gallows to prevent it. Ever since that period of the *Fronde*, the Noble has changed his fighting sword into a court rapier : and now loyally attends his king as ministering satellite ; divides the spoil, not now by violence and murder, but by soliciting and finesse. These men call themselves supports of the throne : singular gilt-pasteboard *caryatides* in that singular edifice ! For the rest, their privileges every way are now much curtailed. That Law authorising a Seigneur, as he returned from hunting, to kill not more than two Serfs, and refresh his feet in their warm blood and bowels, has fallen into perfect desuetude,—and even into incredibility ; for if Deputy Lapoule can believe in it, and call for the abrogation of it, so cannot we. No Charolais, for these last fifty years, though never so fond of shooting, has been in use to bring down slaters and plumbers, and see them roll from their roofs ; but contents himself with partridges and grouse. Close-viewed, their industry and function is that of dressing gracefully and eating sumptuously. As for their debauchery and depravity, it is perhaps unexampled since the era of Tiberius and Commodus. Nevertheless, one has still partly a feeling with the lady Maréchale : “ Depend upon it, Sir, God thinks twice before damning a man of that quality.” These people, of old, surely had virtues, uses ; or they could not have been there. Nay, one virtue they are still required to have (for mortal man cannot live without a conscience) : the virtue of perfect readiness to fight duels.

Such are the shepherds of the people : and now how

fares it with the flock? With the flock, as is inevitable, it fares ill, and ever worse. They are not tended, they are only regularly shorn. They are sent for, to do statute-labour, to pay statute-taxes ; to fatten battle-fields (named “bed of honour”) with their bodies, in quarrels which are not theirs ; their hand and toil is in every possession of man ; but for themselves they have little or no possession. Untaught, uncomforted, unfed ; to pine stagnantly in thick obscuration, in squalid destitution and obstruction : this is the lot of the millions ; *peuple taillable et corvéable à merci et miséricorde*. In Brittany they once rose in revolt at the first introduction of Pendulum Clocks ; thinking it had something to do with the *Gabelle*. Paris requires to be cleared out periodically by the Police ; and the horde of hunger-stricken vagabonds to be sent wandering again over space—for a time. “During one such periodical clearance,” says Lacretelle, “in May 1750, the Police had presumed withal to carry off some reputable people’s children, in the hope of extorting ransoms for them. The mothers fill the public places with cries of despair ; crowds gather, get excited ; so many women in distraction run about exaggerating the alarm : an absurd and horrid fable rises among the poeple ; it is said that the doctors have ordered a Great Person to take baths of young human blood for the restoration of his own, all spoiled by debaucheries. Some of the rioters,” adds Lacretelle, quite coolly, “were hanged on the following days :” the Police went on. O ye poor naked wretches ! and this then is your inarticulate cry to Heaven, as of a dumb tortured animal, crying from uttermost depths of pain and debasement? Do these azure skies, like a dead crystalline vault, only reverberate the echo of it on you? Respond to it only by “hanging on the following days ?”—Not so : not for ever ! Ye are heard in Heaven. And the answer too will come,—in a horror of great darkness, and shakings of the world, and a cup of trembling which all the nations shall drink.

Remark, meanwhile, how from amid the wrecks and dust of this universal Decay new Powers are fashioning

themselves, adapted to the new time, and its destinies. Besides the old Noblesse, originally of Fighters, there is a new recognised Noblesse of Lawyers; whose galaday and proud battle-day even now is. An unrecognised Noblesse of Commerce; powerful enough, with money in its pocket. Lastly, powerfulest of all, least recognised of all, a Noblesse of Literature; without steel on their thigh, without gold in their purse, but with the "grand thaumaturgic faculty of Thought" in their head. French Philosophism has arisen; in which little word how much do we include! Here, indeed, lies properly the cardinal symptom of the whole wide-spread malady. Faith is gone out; Scepticism is come in. Evil abounds and accumulates; no man has Faith to withstand it, to amend it, to begin by amending himself; it must even go on accumulating. While hollow languor and vacuity is the lot of the Upper, and want and stagnation of the Lower, and universal misery is very certain, what other thing is certain? That a Lie cannot be believed! Philosophism knows only this: her other belief is mainly, that in spiritual supersensual matters no Belief is possible. Unhappy! Nay, as yet the Contradiction of a Lie is some kind of Belief; but the Lie with its Contradiction once swept away, what will remain? The five unsatiated Senses will remain, the sixth insatiable Sense (of vanity); the whole *demonic* nature of man will remain,—hurled forth to rage blindly without rule or rein; savage itself, yet with all the tools and weapons of civilisation: a spectacle new in History.

In such a France, as in a Powder-tower, where fire unquenched and now unquenchable is smoking and smouldering all round, has Louis XV. lain down to die. With Pompadourism and Dubarryism, his Fleur-de-lis has been shamefully struck down in all lands and on all seas; Poverty invades even the Royal Exchequer, and Tax-farming can squeeze out no more; there is a quarrel of twenty-five years' standing with the Parliament; everywhere Want, Dishonesty, Unbelief, and hotbrained Sciolists for state-physicians: it is a portentous hour.

Such things can the eye of History see in the sick-room of King Louis, which were invisible to the courtier there. It is twenty years, gone Christmas-day, since Lord Chesterfield, summing up what he had noted of this same France, wrote, and sent off by post, the following words, that have become memorable: "In short, all the symptoms which I have ever met with in History, previous to great Changes and Revolutions in government, now exist and daily increase in France."

## II

## DEATH OF LOUIS XV

(VOL. I, BOOK I, CHAPTER IV)

FRIGHTFUL to all men is Death; from of old named King of Terrors. Our little compact home of an Existence, where we dwelt complaining, yet as in a home, is passing, in dark agonies, into an Unknown of Separation, Foreignness, unconditioned Possibility. The Heathen Emperor asks of his soul: Into what places art thou now departing? The Catholic King must answer: To the Judgment-bar of the Most High God! Yes, it is a summing up of Life; a final settling, and giving-in the "account of the deeds done in the body:" they are done now; and lie there unalterable, and do bear their fruits, long as Eternity shall last.

Louis XV. had always the kingliest abhorrence of Death. Unlike that praying Duke of Orleans, *Egalité's* grandfather,—for indeed several of them had a touch of madness,—who honestly believed that there was no Death! He, if the Court Newsmen can be believed, started up once on a time, glowing with sulphurous contempt and indignation on his poor Secretary, who had stumbled on the words, *feu roi d'Espagne* (the late King of Spain): "*Feu roi, Monsieur?*"—“Monseigneur,” hastily answered the trembling but adroit man of business, “*c'est une titre qu'ils prennent* ('tis a title they take).” Louis, we say, was not so happy; but he did

what he could. He would not suffer Death to be spoken of; avoided the sight of churchyards, funereal monuments, and whatsoever could bring it to mind. It is the resource of the Ostrich; who, hard hunted, sticks his foolish head in the ground, and would fain forget that his foolish unseeing body is not unseen too. Or sometimes, with a spasmodic antagonism, significant of the same thing, and of more, he *would* go; or stopping his court carriages, would send into churchyards, and ask "how many new graves there were to-day," though it gave his poor Pompadour the disagreeablest qualms. We can figure the thought of Louis that day, when, all royally caparisoned for hunting, he met, at some sudden turning in the Wood of Senart, a ragged Peasant with a coffin: "For whom?"—It was for a poor brother slave, whom Majesty had sometimes noticed slaving in those quarters: "What did he die of?"—"Of hunger:"—the King gave his steed the spur.

But figure his thought, when Death is now clutching at his own heart-strings; unlooked for, inexorable! Yes, poor Louis, Death has found thee. No palace walls or life-guards, gorgeous tapestries or gilt buckram of stiffest ceremonial could keep him out; but he is here, here at thy very life-breath, and will extinguish it. Thou, whose whole existence hitherto was a chimera and scenic show, at length becomest a reality: sumptuous Versailles bursts asunder, like a dream, into void Immensity; Time is done, and all the scaffolding of Time falls wrecked with hideous clangour round thy soul: the pale Kingdoms yawn open; there must thou enter, naked, all unking'd, and await what is appointed thee! Unhappy man, there as thou turnest, in dull agony, on thy bed of weariness, what a thought is thine! Purgatory and Hell-fire, now all too possible, in the prospect: in the retrospect—alas, what thing didst thou do that were not better undone; what mortal didst thou generously help; what sorrow hadst thou mercy on? Do the "five hundred thousand" ghosts, who sank shamefully on so many battle-fields from Rossbach to Quebec, that thy Harlot might take revenge for an

epigram,—crowd round thee in this hour? Thy foul Harem; the curses of mothers, the tears and infamy of daughters? Miserable man! thou “hast done evil as thou couldst:” thy whole existence seems one hideous abortion and mistake of Nature; the use and meaning of thee not yet known. Wert thou a fabulous Griffin, *devouring* the works of men; daily dragging virgins to thy cave;—clad also in scales that no spear would pierce: no spear but Death’s? A Griffin not fabulous but real! Frightful, O Louis, seem these moments for thee.—We will pry no further into the horrors of a sinner’s deathbed.

And yet let no meanest man lay flattering unction to his soul. Louis was a Ruler; but art not thou also one? His wide France, look at it from the Fixed Stars (themselves not yet Infinitude), is no wider than thy narrow brickfield, where thou too didst faithfully, or didst unfaithfully. Man, “Symbol of Eternity imprisoned into Time!” it is not thy works, which are all mortal, infinitely little, and the greatest no greater than the least, but only the Spirit thou workest in, that can have worth or continuance.

But reflect, in any case, what a life-problem this of poor Louis, when he rose as *Bien-Aimé* from that Metz sick-bed, really was. What son of Adam could have swayed such incoherences into coherence? Could he? Blindest Fortune alone has cast *him* on the top of it: he swims there; can as little sway it as the drift-log sways the wind-tossed moon-stirred Atlantic. “What have I done to be so loved?” he said then. He may say now: What have I done to be so hated! Thou hast done nothing, poor Louis! Thy fault is properly even this, that thou didst *nothing*. What could poor Louis do? Abdicate, and wash his hands of it,—in favour of the first that would accept! Other clear wisdom there was none for him. As it was, he stood gazing dubiously, the *absurdest* mortal extant (a very *Solecism Incarnate*), into the *absurdest* confused world;—wherein at last nothing seemed so certain as this,

That he, the incarnate Solecism, had five senses ; that there were Flying Tables (*Tables Volantes*, which vanish through the floor, to come back reloaded), and a *Parc-aux-cerfs*.

Whereby at least we have again this historical curiosity : a human being in an original position ; swimming passively, as on some boundless "Mother of Dead Dogs," towards issues which he partly saw. For Louis had withal a kind of insight in him. So when a new Minister of Marine, or what else it might be, came announcing his new era, the Scarlet-woman would hear from the lips of Majesty at supper : "Yes, he spread out his ware like another ; promised the beautifulest things in the world ; not a thing of which will come : he does not know this region ; he will see." Or again : "'Tis the twentieth time I have heard all that ; France will never get a Navy, I believe." How touching also was this : "If *I* were Lieutenant of Police, I would prohibit those Paris cabriolets."

Doomed mortal ;—for is it not a doom to be Solecism incarnate ! A new *Roi Fainéant*, King Donothing ; but with the strangest new *Mayor of the Palace* : no bow-legged Pepin now for *Mayor*, but that same cloud-capt, fire-breathing Spectre of DEMOCRACY ; incalculable, which is enveloping the world !—Was Louis, then, no wickeder than this or the other private Donothing and Eatall ; such as we often enough see, under the name of Man of Pleasure, cumbering God's diligent Creation, for a time ? Say, wretcheder ! His Life-solecism was seen and felt of a whole scandalised world ; him endless Oblivion cannot engulf, and swallow to endless depths,—not yet for a generation or two.

However, be this as it will, we remark, not without interest, that "on the evening of the 4th," Dame Dubarry issues from the sick-room, with perceptible "trouble in her visage." It is the fourth evening of May, year of Grace 1774. Such a whispering in the *Œil-de-Bœuf* ! Is he dying then ? What can be said,

is that Dubarry seems making up her packages ; she sails weeping through her gilt boudoirs, as if taking leave. D'Aiguillon and Company are near their last card ; nevertheless they will not yet throw up the game. But as for the sacramental controversy, it is as good as settled without being mentioned ; Louis sends for his Abbé Moudon in the course of next night ; is confessed by him, some say for the space of "seventeen minutes," and demands the sacraments of his own accord.

Nay already, in the afternoon, behold is not this your Sorceress Dubarry with the handkerchief at her eyes, mounting D'Aiguillon's chariot ; rolling off in his Duchess's consolatory arms ? She is gone : and her place knows her no more. Vanish, false Sorceress ; into Space ! Needless to hover at neighbouring Ruel ; for thy day is done. Shut are the royal palace-gates for evermore ; hardly in coming years shalt thou, under cloud of night, descend once, in black domino, like a black night-bird, and disturb the fair Antoinette's music-party in the Park ; all Birds of Paradise flying from thee, and musical windpipes growing mute. Thou unclean, yet unmalignant, not unpitiable thing ! What a course was thine : from that first trucklebed (in Joan of Arc's country) where thy mother bore thee, with tears, to an unnamed father : forward, through lowest subterranean depths, and over highest sunlit heights, of Harlotdom and Rascaldom—to the guillotine-axe, which sheers away thy vainly whimpering head ! Rest there uncursed ; only buried and abolished ; what else befitted thee ?

Louis, meanwhile, is in considerable impatience for his sacraments ; sends more than once to the window, to see whether they are not coming. Be of comfort, Louis, what comfort thou canst : they are under way, these sacraments. Towards six in the morning, they arrive. Cardinal Grand-Almoner Roche-Aymon is here in pontificals, with his pyxes and his tools : he approaches the royal pillow ; elevates his wafer ; mutters or seems to mutter somewhat ;—and so (as the Abbé Georgel, in words that stick to one, expresses it) has Louis " made

the *amende honorable* to God :” so does your Jesuit construe it.—“ *Wa, Wa,*” as the wild Clotaire groaned out, when life was departing, “what great God is this that pulls down the strength of the strongest kings !”

The *amende honorable*, what “legal apology” you will, to God :—but not, if D’Aiguillon can help it, to man. Dubarry still hovers in his mansion at Ruel ; and while there is life, there is hope. Grand-Almoner Roche-Aymon, accordingly (for he seems to be in the secret), has no sooner seen his pyxes and gear repacked, than he is stepping majestically forth again, as if the work were done ! But King’s Confessor Abbé Moudon starts forward ; with anxious acidulent face, twitches him by the sleeve ; whispers in his ear. Whereupon the poor Cardinal has to turn round ; and declare audibly, “that his Majesty repents of any subjects of scandal he may have given (*a pu donner*) ; and purposes, by the strength of Heaven assisting him, to avoid the like—for the future !” Words listened to by Richelieu with mastiff-face, growing blacker ; and answered to, aloud, “with an epithet,”—which Besenval will not repeat. Old Richelieu, conqueror of Minorca, companion of Flying-Table orgies, perforator of bed-room walls, is thy day also done ?

Alas, the Chapel organs may keep going ; the Shrine of Sainte Geneviève be let down, and pulled up again, —without effect. In the evening the whole Court, with Dauphin and Dauphiness, assist at the Chapel : priests are hoarse with chanting their “Prayers of Forty Hours ;” and the heaving bellows blow. Almost frightful ! For the very heaven blackens ; battering rain-torrents dash, with thunder ; almost drowning the organ’s voice : and electric fire-flashes make the very flambeaux on the altar pale. So that the most, as we are told, retired, when it was over, with hurried steps, “in a state of meditation (*recueillement*),” and said little or nothing.

So it has lasted for the better half of a fortnight ; the Dubarry gone almost a week. Besenval says, all the

world was getting impatient *que cela finit*; that poor Louis would have done with it. It is now the 10th of May, 1774. He will soon have done now.

This tenth May day falls into the loathsome sick-bed; but dull, unnoticed there: for they that look out of the windows are quite darkened; the cistern wheel moves discordant on its axis; Life, like a spent steed, is panting towards the goal. In their remote apartments, Dauphin and Dauphiness stand road-ready; all grooms and equerries booted and spurred: waiting for some signal to escape the house of pestilence.<sup>1</sup> And, hark! across the *Œil-de-Boeuf*, what sound is that; sound “terrible and absolutely like thunder?” It is the rush of the whole Court, rushing as in wager, to salute the new Sovereigns: Hail to your Majesties! The Dauphin and Dauphiness are King and Queen! Overpowered with many emotions, they two fall on their knees together, and, with streaming tears, exclaim: “O God, guide us, protect us; we are too young to reign!”—Too young indeed.

But thus, in any case, “with a sound absolutely like thunder,” has the Horologe of Time struck, and an old Era passed away. The Louis that was, lies forsaken, a mass of abhorred clay; abandoned “to some poor persons, and priests of the *Chapelle Ardente*,”—who make haste to put him “in two lead coffins, pouring in abundant spirits of wine.” The new Louis with his Court is rolling towards Choisy, through the summer afternoon: the royal tears still flow; but a word mispronounced by Monseigneur d’Artois sets them all laughing, and they weep no more. Light mortals, how

<sup>1</sup> One grudges to interfere with the beautiful theatrical “candle,” which Madame Campan (i. 79) has lit on this occasion, and blown out at the moment of death. What candles might be lit or blown out, in so large an Establishment as that of Versailles, no man at such distance would like to affirm: at the same time, as it was two o’clock in a May Afternoon, and these royal Stables must have been some five or six hundred yards from the royal sick-room, the “candle” does threaten to go out in spite of us. It remains burning indeed—in her fantasy; throwing light on much in those *Mémoires* of hers.

ye walk your light life-minuet, over bottomless abysses, divided from you by a film !

For the rest, the proper authorities felt that no Funeral could be too unceremonious. Besenval himself thinks it was unceremonious enough. Two carriages containing two noblemen of the usher species, and a Versailles clerical person; some score of mounted pages, some fifty palfreniers: these, with torches, but not so much as in black, start from Versailles on the second evening, with their leaden bier. At a high trot, they start; and keep up that pace. For the jibes (*brocards*) of those Parisians, who stand planted in two rows, all the way to St. Denis, and "give vent to their pleasantry, the characteristic of the nation," do not tempt one to slacken. Towards midnight the vaults of St. Denis receive their own: unwept by any eye of all these; if not by poor *Loque* his neglected Daughter's, whose Nunnery is hard by.

Him they crush down, and huddle under-ground, in this impatient way; him and his era of sin and tyranny and shame: for behold a New Era is come; the future all the brighter that the past was base.

### III

## THE PROCESSION OF THE STATES-GENERAL

(VOL. I, BOOK IV, CHAPTER IV)

BUT now finally the Sun, on Monday the 4th of May, has risen;—unconcerned, as if it were no special day. And yet, as his first rays could strike music from the Memnon's Statue on the Nile, what tones were these, so thrilling, tremulous, of preparation and foreboding, which he awoke in every bosom at Versailles! Huge Paris, in all conceivable and inconceivable vehicles, is pouring itself forth; from each Town and Village come subsidiary rills. Versailles is a very sea of men. But above all, from the Church of St. Louis to the Church of Notre-Dame: one vast suspended-billow of Life,—with

*spray* scattered even to the chimney-tops ! For on chimney-tops too, as over the roofs, and up thitherwards on every lamp-iron, signpost, breakneck coign of vantage sits patriotic Courage ; and every window bursts with patriotic Beauty : for the Deputies are gathering at St. Louis Church ; to march in procession to Notre-Dame, and hear sermon.

Yes, friends, ye may sit and look : bodily or in thought, all France, and all Europe, may sit and look ; for it is a day like few others. Oh, one might weep like Xerxes : —So many serried rows sit perched there ; like winged creatures, alighted out of Heaven : all these, and so many more that follow them, shall have wholly fled aloft again, vanishing into the blue Deep ; and the memory of this day still be fresh. It is the baptism day of Democracy ; sick Time has given it birth, the numbered months being run. The extreme-unction day of Feudalism ! A superannuated System of Society, decrepit with toils (for has it not done much ; produced *you*, and what ye have and know !)—and with thefts and brawls, named glorious-victories ; and with profligacies, sensualities, and on the whole with dotage and senility,—is now to die : and so, with death-throes and birth-throes, a new one is to be born. What a work, O Earth and Heavens, what a work ! Battles and bloodshed, September Massacres, Bridges of Lodi, retreats of Moscow, Waterloos, Peterloos, Tenpound Franchises, Tarbarrels and Guillotines ; —and from this present date, if one might prophesy, some two centuries of it still to fight ! Two centuries ; hardly less ; before Democracy go through its due, most baleful, stages of *Quackocracy* ; and a pestilential World be burnt up, and have begun to grow green and young again.

Rejoice nevertheless, ye Versailles multitudes ; to you, from whom all this is hid, the glorious end of it is visible. This day, sentence of death is pronounced on Shams ; judgment of resuscitation, were it but afar off, is pronounced on Realities. This day, it is declared aloud, as with a Doom-trumpet, that *a Lie is unbelievable*. Believe that, stand by that, if more there be not ; and let

what thing or things soever will follow it follow. "Ye can no other ; God be your help !" So spake a greater than any of you ; opening *his* Chapter of World-History.

Behold, however ! The doors of St. Louis Church flung wide ; and the Procession of Processions advancing towards Notre-Dame ! Shouts rend the air ; one shout, at which Grecian birds might drop dead. It is indeed a stately, solemn sight. The Elected of France, and then the Court of France ; they are marshalled and march there, all in prescribed place and costume. Our Commons "in plain black mantle and white cravat ;" Noblesse, in gold-worked, bright-dyed cloaks of velvet, resplendent, rustling with laces, waving with plumes ; the Clergy in rochet, alb, or other best *pontificalibus* : lastly comes the King himself, and King's Household, also in their brightest blaze of pomp,—their brightest and final one. Some Fourteen Hundred Men blown together from all winds on the deepest errand.

Yes, in that silent marching mass there lies Futurity enough. No symbolic Ark, like the old Hebrews, do these men bear : yet with them too is a Covenant ; they too preside at a new Era in the History of men. The whole Future is there, and Destiny dim-brooding over it ; in the hearts and unshaped thoughts of these men, it lies illegible, inevitable. Singular to think : *they* have it in them ; yet not they, not mortal, only the Eye above can read it,—as it shall unfold itself, in fire and thunder, of siege, and field artillery ; in the rustling of battle-banners, the tramp of hosts, in the glow of burning cities, the shriek of strangled nations ! Such things lie hidden, safe-wrapt in this Fourth day of May ;—say rather, had lain in some other unknown day, of which this latter is the public fruit and outcome. As indeed what wonders lie in every Day,—had we the sight, as happily we have not, to decipher it : for is not every meanest Day "the conflux of two Eternities !"

Meanwhile, suppose we too, good Reader, should, as now without miracle Muse Clio enables us,—take *our*

station also on some coign of vantage ; and glance momentarily over this Procession, and this Life-sea ; with far other eyes than the rest do,—namely with prophetic ? We can mount, and stand there, without fear of falling.

As for the Life-sea, or onlooking unnumbered Multitude, it is unfortunately all-too dim. Yet as we gaze fixedly, do not nameless Figures not a few, which shall not always be nameless, disclose themselves ; visible or presumable there ! Young Baroness de Staël —she evidently looks from a window ; among older honourable women. Her father is Minister, and one of the gala personages ; to his own eyes the chief one. Young spiritual Amazon, thy rest is not there ; nor thy loved Father's : “as Malebranche saw all things in God, so M. Necker sees all things in Necker,”—a theorem that will not hold.

But where is the brown-locked, light-behaved, fire-hearted Demoiselle Théroigne ? Brown eloquent Beauty ; who, with thy winged words and glances, shalt thrill rough bosoms, whole steel battalions, and persuade an Austrian Kaiser,—pike and helm lie provided for thee in due season ; and, alas, also strait-waistcoat and long lodging in the Salpêtrière ! Better hadst thou staid in native Luxemburg, and been the mother of some brave man's children : but it was not thy task, it was not thy lot.

Of the rougher sex how, without tongue, or hundred tongues, of iron, enumerate the notabilities ! Has not Marquis Valadi hastily quitted his Quaker broadbrim ; his Pythagorean Greek in Wapping, and the city of Glasgow ? De Morande from his *Courrier de l'Europe* ; Linguet from his *Annales*, they looked eager through the London fog, and became Ex-Editors,—that they might feed the guillotine, and have their due. Does Louvet (of *Faublas*) stand a- tiptoe ? And Brissot, hight De Warville, friend of the Blacks ? He, with Marquis Condorcet, and Clavière the Genevese “have created the *Moniteur* Newspaper,” or are about creating it. Able Editors must give account of such a day.

Or seest thou with any distinctness, low down probably, not in places of honour, a Stanislas Maillard, riding-tipstaff (*huissier à cheval*) of the Châtelet ; one of the shiftest of men ? A Captain Hulin of Geneva, Captain Elie of the Queen's Regiment ; both with an air of half-pay ? Jourdan, with tile-coloured whiskers, not yet with tile-beard ; an unjust dealer in mules ? He shall be, in few months, Jourdan the Headsman, and have other work.

Surely also, in some place not of honour, stands or sprawls up querulous, that he too, though short, may see,—one squalidest bleared mortal, redolent of soot and horse-drugs : Jean Paul Marat of Neuchâtel ! O Marat, Renovator of Human Science, Lecturer on Optics ; O thou remarkablest Horseleech, once in D'Artois' Stables,—as thy bleared soul looks forth, through thy bleared, dull-acrid, wo-stricken face, what sees it in all this ? Any faintest light of hope ; like dayspring after Nova-Zembla night ? Or is it but *blue* sulphur-light, and spectres ; wo, suspicion, revenge without end ?

Of Draper Lecointre, how he shut his cloth-shop hard by, and stepped forth, one need hardly speak. Nor of Santerre, the sonorous Brewer from the Faubourg St. Antoine. Two other Figures, and only two, we signalise there. The huge, brawny Figure ; through whose black brows, and rude flattened face (*figure écrasée*), there looks a waste energy as of Hercules not yet furibund,—he is an esurient, unprovided Advocate ; Danton by name : him mark. Then that other, his slight-built comrade, and craft-brother ; he with the long curling locks ; with the face of dingy blackguardism, wondrously irradiated with genius, as if a naphtha-lamp burnt within it : that Figure is Camille Desmoulins. A fellow of infinite shrewdness, wit, nay humour ; one of the sprightliest clearest souls in all these millions. Thou poor Camille, say of thee what they may, it were but falsehood to pretend one did not almost love thee, thou headlong lightly sparkling man ! But the brawny, not yet furibund Figure, we say, is

Jacques Danton ; a name that shall be “ tolerably known in the Revolution.” He is President of the electoral Cordeliers District at Paris, or about to be it ; and shall open his lungs of brass.

We dwell no longer on the mixed shouting Multitude : for now, behold, the Commons Deputies are at hand !

Which of these Six Hundred individuals, in plain white cravat, that have come up to regenerate France, might one guess would become their *king*? For a king or leader they, as all bodies of men, must have : be their work what it may, there is one man there who, by character, faculty, position, is fittest of all to do it ; that man, as future not yet elected king, walks there among the rest. He with the thick black locks, will it be ? With the *hure*, as himself calls it, or black *boar's-head*, fit to be “shaken” as a senatorial portent? Through whose shaggy beetle-brows, and rough-hewn, seamed, carbuncled face, there look natural ugliness, small-pox, incontinence, bankruptcy,—and burning fire of genius ; like comet-fire glaring fuliginous through murkiest confusions ? It is *Gabriel Honoré Riquetti de Mirabeau*, the world-compeller ; man-ruling Deputy of Aix ! According to the Baroness de Staël, he steps proudly along, though looked at askance here ; and shakes his black *chevelure*, or lion's-mane ; as if prophetic of great deeds.

Yes, Reader, that is the Type-Frenchman of this epoch ; as Voltaire was of the last. He is French in his aspirations, acquisitions, in his virtues, in his vices ; perhaps more French than any other man ;—and intrinsically such a mass of manhood too. Mark him well. The National Assembly were all different without that one ; nay, he might say with the old Despot : “ The National Assembly ? I am that.”

Of a southern climate, of wild southern blood : for the Riquettis, or Arrighettis, had to fly from Florence and the Guelfs, long centuries ago, and settled in Provence ; where from generation to generation they have ever approved themselves a peculiar kindred :

irascible, indomitable, sharp-cutting, true, like the steel they wore, of an intensity and activity that sometimes verged towards madness, yet did not reach it. One ancient Riquetti, in mad fulfilment of a mad vow, chains two Mountains together ; and the chain, with its "iron star of five rays," is still to be seen. May not a modern Riquetti unchain so much, and set it drifting,—which also shall be seen? \* \* \*

But consider further how, as the old Marquis still snarls, he has "made away with (*humé*, swallowed) all *Formulas*;"—a fact which, if we meditate it, will in these days mean much. This is no man of system, then ; he is only a man of instincts and insights. A man nevertheless who will glare fiercely on any object ; and see through it, and conquer it : for he has intellect, he has will, force beyond other men. A man not with *logic-spectacles* ; but with an *eye*! Unhappily without Decalogue, moral Code or Theorem of any fixed sort ; yet not without a strong living Soul in him, and Sincerity there : a Reality, not an Artificiality, not a Sham ! And so he, having struggled "forty years against despotism," and "made away with all formulas," shall now become the spokesman of a Nation bent to do the same. For is it not precisely the struggle of France also to cast off despotism ; to make away with *her* old formulas,—having found them naught, worn out, far from the reality ? She will make away with *such* formulas ;—and even go *bare*, if need be, till she have found new ones.

Towards such work, in such manner, marches he, this singular Riquetti Mirabeau. In fiery rough figure, with black Samson-locks under the slouch-hat, he steps along there. A fiery fuliginous mass, which could not be choked and smothered, but would fill all France with smoke. And now it has got *air* ; it will burn its whole substance, its whole smoke-atmosphere too, and fill all France with flame. Strange lot ! Forty years of that smouldering, with foul fire-damp and vapour enough ; then victory over that ;—and like a burning mountain he blazes heaven-high ; and for twenty-three resplendent

months, pours out, in flame and molten fire-torrents, all that is in him, the Pharos and Wonder-sign of an amazed Europe ;—and then lies hollow, cold forever ! Pass on, thou questionable Gabriel Honoré, the greatest of them all : in the whole National Deputies, in the whole Nation, there is none like and none second to thee.

But now if Mirabeau is the greatest, who of these Six Hundred may be the meanest ? Shall we say, that anxious, slight, ineffectual-looking man, under thirty, in spectacles ; his eyes (were the glasses off) troubled, careful ; with upturned face, snuffing dimly the uncertain future times ; complexion of a multiplex atrabilian colour, the final shade of which may be the pale sea-green. That greenish-coloured (*verdâtre*) individual is an Advocate of Arras ; his name is *Maximilien Robespierre*. The son of an Advocate ; his father founded mason-lodges under Charles Edward, the English Prince or Pretender. Maximilien the first-born was thrifitly educated ; he had brisk Camille Desmoulin for schoolmate in the College of Louis le Grand, at Paris. But he begged our famed Necklace-Cardinal, Rohan, the patron, to let him depart thence, and resign in favour of a younger brother. The strict-minded Max departed ; home to paternal Arras ; and even had a Law-case there and pleaded, not unsuccessfully, “in favour of the first Franklin thunder-rod.” With a strict painful mind, an understanding small but clear and ready, he grew in favour with official persons, who could foresee in him an excellent man of business, happily quite free from genius. The Bishop, therefore, taking counsel, appoints him Judge of his diocese ; and he faithfully does justice to the people : till behold, one day, a culprit comes whose crime merits hanging ; and the strict-minded Max must abdicate, for his conscience will not permit the dooming of any son of Adam to die. A strict-minded, strait-laced man ! A man unfit for Revolutions ? Whose small soul, transparent wholesome-looking as small-ale, could by no chance ferment into virulent *alegar*,—the

mother of ever new alegar, till all France were grown acetous virulent? We shall see. \* \* \*

In the Commons Deputies there are Merchants, Artists, Men of Letters; three hundred and seventy-four Lawyers; and at least one Clergyman: the *Abbé Sieyes*. Him also Paris sends, among its twenty. Behold him, the light thin man; cold, but elastic, wiry; instinct with the pride of Logic; passionless, or with but one passion, that of self-conceit. If indeed that can be called a passion, which, in its independent concentrated greatness, seems to have soared into transcendentalism; and to sit there with a kind of god-like indifference, and look down on passion! He is the man, and wisdom shall die with him. This is the Sieyes who shall be System-builder, Constitution-builder General; and build Constitutions (as many as wanted) skyhigh,—which shall all unfortunately fall before he get the scaffolding away. "*La Politique*," said he to Dumont, "Polity is a science I think I have completed (*achevée*)."  
What things, O Sieyes, with thy clear assiduous eyes, art thou to see! But were it not curious to know how Sieyes, now in these days (for he is said to be still alive)<sup>1</sup> looks out on all that Constitution masonry, through the rheumy soberness of extreme age? Might we hope, still with the old irrefragable transcendentalism? The victorious cause pleased the gods, the vanquished one pleased Sieyes (*victa Catoni*).

Thus, however, amid skyrending *vivats*, and blessings from every heart, has the Procession of the Commons Deputies rolled by.

Next follow the Noblesse, and next the Clergy; concerning both of whom it might be asked, What they specially have come for? Specially, little as they dream of it, to answer this question, put in a voice of thunder; What are you doing in God's fair Earth and Task-garden; where whosoever is not working is begging or stealing? Wo, wo to themselves and to all, if they can only answer: Collecting tithes, Preserving game!—

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1834.

Remark, meanwhile, how *D'Orleans* affects to step before his own Order, and mingle with the Commons. For him are *vivats* : few for the rest, though all wave in plumed “hats of a feudal cut,” and have sword on thigh ; though among them is *D'Antraigues*, the young Languedocian gentleman,—and indeed many a Peer more or less noteworthy.

There are *Liancourt*, and *La Rochefoucault* ; the liberal Anglomaniac Dukes. There is filially pious *Lally* ; a couple of liberal *Lameths*. Above all, there is a *Lafayette* ; whose name shall be Cromwell-Grandison, and fill the world. Many a “formula” has this *Lafayette* too made away with ; yet not *all* formulas. He sticks by the Washington-formula ; and by that he will stick ;—and hang by it, as by sure bower-anchor hangs and swings the tight war-ship, which, after all changes of wildest weather and water, is found still hanging. Happy for him ; be it glorious or not ! Alone of all Frenchmen he has a theory of the world, and right mind to conform thereto ; he can become a hero and perfect character, were it but the hero of one idea. \* \* \*

There then walks our French Noblesse. All in the old pomp of chivalry : and yet, alas, how changed from the old position ; drifted far down from their native latitude, like Arctic icebergs got into the Equatorial sea, and fast thawing there ! Once these Chivalry *Duces* (Dukes, as they are still named) did actually *lead* the world,—were it only towards battle-spoil, where lay the world's best wages then : moreover, being the ablest Leaders going, they had their lion's share, those *Duces* ; which none could grudge them. But now, when so many Looms, improved Ploughshares, Steam-Engines and Bills of Exchange have been invented ; and for battle-brawling itself, men hire Drill-Sergeants at eighteenpence a-day,—what mean these goldmantled Chivalry Figures, walking there “in black velvet cloaks” in high-plumed “hats of a feudal cut ?” Reeds shaken in the wind !

The Clergy have got up ; with *Cahiers* for abolishing

pluralities, enforcing residence of bishops, better payment of tithes. The Dignitaries, we can observe, walk stately, apart from the numerous Undignified,—who indeed are properly little other than Commons disguised in Curate-frocks. Here, however, though by strange ways, shall the Precept be fulfilled, and they that are greatest (much to their astonishment) become least. \* \* \*

But yonder, halting lamely along, thou noticest next *Bishop Talleyrand-Perigord*, his Reverence of Autun. A sardonic grimness lies in that irreverend Reverence of Autun. He will do and suffer strange things; and will become surely one of the strangest things ever seen, or like to be seen. A man living in falsehood, and on falsehood; yet not what you can call a false man: there is the specialty! It will be an enigma for future ages, one may hope: hitherto such a product of Nature and Art was possible only for this age of ours,—Age of Paper, and of the Burning of Paper. Consider Bishop Talleyrand and Marquis Lafayette as the topmost of their two kinds; and say once more, looking at what they did and what they were, *O Tempus ferax rerum!*

On the whole, however, has not this unfortunate Clergy also drifted in the Time-stream, far from its native latitude? An anomalous mass of men; of whom the whole world has already a dim understanding that it can understand nothing. They were once a Priesthood, interpreters of Wisdom, revealers of the Holy that is in Man; a true *Clerus* (or Inheritance of God on Earth): but now?—They pass silently, with such *Cahiers* as they have been able to redact; and none cries, God bless them.

King Louis with his Court brings up the rear: he cheerful, in this day of hope, is saluted with plaudits; still more Necker his Minister. Not so the Queen; on whom hope shines not steadily any more. Ill-fated Queen! Her hair is already gray with many cares and crosses; her firstborn son is dying in these weeks: black falsehood has inefaceably soiled her name;

ineffaceably while this generation lasts. Instead of *Vive la Reine*, voices insult her with *Vive d'Orleans*. Of her queenly beauty little remains except its stateliness ; not now gracious, but haughty, rigid, silently enduring. With a most mixed feeling, wherein joy has no part, she resigns herself to a day she hoped never to have seen. Poor Marie Antoinette ; with thy quick noble instincts ; vehement glancings, vision all-too fitful narrow for the work thou hast to do ! O there are tears in store for thee ; bitterest wailings, soft womanly meltings, though thou hast the heart of an imperial Theresa's Daughter. Thou doomed one, shut thy eyes on the future !—

And so, in stately Procession, have passed the Elected of France. Some towards honour and quick fire-consummation ; most towards dishonour ; not a few towards massacre, confusion, emigration, desperation : all towards Eternity !—So many heterogeneities cast together into the fermenting-vat ; there, with incalculable action, counteraction, elective affinities, explosive developments, to work out healing for a sick moribund System of Society ! Probably the strangest Body of Men, if we consider well, that ever met together on our Planet on such an errand.

## IV

## THE FALL OF THE BASTILLE

(VOL. I, BOOK V, CHAPTER VI)

BUT, to the living and the struggling, a new, Fourteenth morning dawns. Under all roofs of this distracted City is the nodus of a drama, not untragical, crowding towards solution. The bustlings and preparations, the tremors and menaces ; the tears that fell from old eyes ! This day, my sons, ye shall quit you like men. By the memory of your fathers' wrongs, by the hope of your

children's rights ! Tyranny impends in red wrath : help for you is none, if not in your own right hands. This day ye must do or die.

From earliest light, a sleepless Permanent Committee has heard the old cry, now waxing almost frantic, mutinous : Arms ! Arms ! Provost Flesselles, or what traitors there are among you, may think of those Charleville Boxes. A hundred-and-fifty thousand of us ; and but the third man furnished with so much as a pike ! Arms are the one thing needful : with arms we are an unconquerable man-defying National Guard ; without arms, a rabble to be whiffed with grapeshot.

Happily the word has arisen, for no secret can be kept,—that there lie muskets at the *Hôtel des Invalides*. Thither will we : King's Procureur M. Ethys de Corny, and whatsoever of authority a Permanent Committee can lend, shall go with us. Besenval's Camp is there ; perhaps he will not fire on us ; if he kill us, we shall but die.

Alas, poor Besenval, with his troops melting away in that manner, has not the smallest humour to fire ! At five o'clock this morning, as he lay dreaming, oblivious in the *École Militaire*, a "figure" stood suddenly at his bedside ; "with face rather handsome ; eyes inflamed, speech rapid and curt, air audacious :" such a figure drew Priam's curtains ! The message and monition of the figure was, that resistance would be hopeless ; that if blood flowed, wo to him who shed it. Thus spoke the figure : and vanished. "Withal there was a kind of eloquence that struck one." Besenval admits that he should have arrested him, but did not. Who this figure with inflamed eyes, with speech rapid and curt, might be ? Besenval knows, but mentions not. Camille Desmoulins ? Pythagorean Marquis Valadi, inflamed with "violent motions all night at the Palais Royal ?" Fame names him, "Young M. Meillar ;" then shuts her lips about him forever.

In any case, behold about nine in the morning, our National Volunteers rolling in long wide flood, south-westward to the *Hôtel des Invalides* ; in search of the one

thing needful. King's Procureur M. Ethys de Corny and officials are there ; the Curé of Saint Etienne du Mont marches unpacific, at the head of his militant Parish ; the Clerks of the Basoche in red coats we see marching, now Volunteers of the Basoche ; the Volunteers of the Palais Royal :—National Volunteers, numerable by tens of thousands ; of one heart and mind. The King's muskets are the Nation's ; think, old M. de Sombreuil, how, in this extremity, thou wilt refuse them ! Old M. de Sombreuil would fain hold parley, send couriers ; but it skills not : the walls are scaled, no Invalide firing a shot ; the gates must be flung open. Patriotism rushes in, tumultuous, from grunsel up to ridge-tile, through all rooms and passages ; rummaging distractedly for arms. What cellar, or what cranny can escape it ? The arms are found ; all safe there ; lying packed in straw, —apparently with a view to being burnt ! More ravenous than famishing lions over dead prey, the multitude, with clangour and vociferation, pounces on them ; struggling, dashing, clutching :—to the jamming-up, to the pressure, fracture and probable extinction of the weaker Patriot. And so, with such protracted crash of deafening, most discordant Orchestra-music, the Scene is changed ; and eight-and-twenty thousand sufficient firelocks are on the shoulders of as many National Guards, lifted thereby out of darkness into fiery light.

Let Besenval look at the glitter of these muskets, as they flash by ! Gardes Françaises, it is said, have cannon levelled on him ; ready to open, if need were, from the other side of the River. Motionless sits he ; “astonished,” one may flatter oneself, “at the proud bearing (*fière contenance*) of the Parisians.”—And now, to the Bastille, ye intrepid Parisians ! There grapeshot still threatens : thither all men's thoughts and steps are now tending.

Old De Launay, as we hinted, withdrew “into his interior” soon after midnight of Sunday. He remains there ever since, hampered, as all military gentlemen now are, in the saddest conflict of uncertainties. The

Hôtel-de-Ville "invites" him to admit National Soldiers, which is a soft name for surrendering. On the other hand, His Majesty's orders were precise. His garrison is but eighty-two old Invalides, reinforced by thirty-two young Swiss ; his walls indeed are nine feet thick, he has cannon and powder ; but, alas, only one day's provision of victuals. The city too is French, the poor garrison mostly French. Rigorous old De Launay, think what thou wilt do !

All morning, since nine, there has been a cry everywhere : To the Bastille ! Repeated "deputations of citizens" have been here, passionate for arms ; whom De Launay has got dismissed by soft speeches through port-holes. Towards noon, Elector Thuriot de la Rosière gains admittance ; finds De Launay indisposed for surrender ; nay disposed for blowing up the place rather. Thuriot mounts with him to the battlements ; heaps of paving-stones, old iron and missiles lie piled ; cannon all duly levelled ; in every embrasure a cannon,—only drawn back a little ! But outwards, behold, O Thuriot, how the multitude flows on, welling through every street ; tocsin furiously pealing, all drums beating the *générale* : the Suburb Saint-Antoine rolling hitherward wholly, as one man ! Such vision (spectral yet real) thou, O Thuriot, as from thy Mount of Vision, beholdest in this moment : prophetic of what other Phantasmagories, and loud-gibbering Spectral Realities, which thou yet beholdest not, but shalt ! "Que voulez-vous ?" said De Launay, turning pale at the sight, with an air of reproach, almost of menace. "Monsieur," said Thuriot, rising into the moral-sublime, "what mean *you* ? Consider if I could not precipitate *both* of us from this height,"—say only a hundred feet, exclusive of the walled ditch ! Whereupon De Launay fell silent. Thuriot shows himself from some pinnacle, to comfort the multitude becoming suspicious, fumescent : then descends ; departs with protest ; with warning addressed also to the Invalides,—on whom, however, it produces but a mixed indistinct impression. The old heads are none of the clearest ; besides, it is said, De Launay has

been profuse of beverages (*prodigua des boissons*). They think, they will not fire,—if not fired on, if they can help it; but must, on the whole, be ruled considerably by circumstances.

Wo to thee, De Launay, in such an hour, if thou canst not, taking some one firm decision, *rule* circumstances! Soft speeches will not serve; hard grapeshot is questionable; but hovering between the two is *unquestionable*. Ever wider swells the tide of men; their infinite hum waxing ever louder, into imprecations, perhaps into crackle of stray musketry,—which latter, on walls nine feet thick, cannot do execution. The Outer Drawbridge has been lowered for Thuriot; new *deputation of citizens* (it is the third, and noisiest of all) penetrates that way into the Outer Court; soft speeches producing no clearance of these, De Launay gives fire; pulls up his Drawbridge. A slight sputter;—which has *kindled* the too combustible chaos; made it a roaring fire-chaos! Bursts forth Insurrection, at sight of its own blood (for there were deaths by that sputter of fire), into endless rolling explosion of musketry, distraction, execration;—and over head, from the Fortress, let one great gun, with its grapeshot, go booming, to show what we *could* do. The Bastille is besieged!

On, then, all Frenchmen, that have hearts in your bodies! Roar with all your throats, of cartilage and metal, ye Sons of Liberty; stir spasmatically whatsoever of utmost faculty is in you, soul, body, or spirit; for it is the hour! Smite, thou Louis Tournay, cartwright of the Marais, old-soldier of the Regiment Dauphiné; smite at that Outer Drawbridge chain, though the fiery hail whistles round thee! Never, over nave or felloe, did thy axe strike such a stroke. Down with it, man; down with it to Orcus: let the whole accursed Edifice sink thither, and Tyranny be swallowed up forever! Mounted, some say, on the roof of the guardroom, some “on bayonets stuck into joints of the wall,” Louis Tournay smites, brave Aubin Bonnemère (also an old soldier) seconding him: the chain yields, breaks; the huge Drawbridge slams down, thundering (*avec fracas*).

Glorious: and yet, alas, it is still but the outworks. The Eight grim Towers, with their *Invalides* musketry, their paving stones and cannon-mouths, still soar aloft intact;—Ditch yawning impassable, stone-faced; the inner Drawbridge with its *back* towards us: the Bastille is still to take!

To describe the Siege of the Bastille (thought to be one of the most important in History) perhaps transcends the talent of mortals. Could one but, after infinite reading, get to understand so much as the plan of the building! But there is open Esplanade, at the end of the Rue Saint-Antoine; there are such Forecourts, *Cour Avancé*, *Cour de l'Orme*, arched Gateway (where Louis Tournay now fights); then new drawbridges, dormant-bridges, rampart-bastions, and the grim Eight Towers: a labyrinthic Mass, high-frowning there, of all ages from twenty years to four hundred and twenty;—beleaguered, in this its last hour, as we said, by mere Chaos come again! Ordnance of all calibres; throats of all capacities; men of all plans, every man his own engineer: seldom since the war of Pygmies and Cranes was there seen so anomalous a thing. Half-pay Elie is home for a suit of regimentals; no one would heed him in coloured clothes: half-pay Hulin is haranguing Gardes Françaises in the Place de Grève. Frantic Patriots pick up the grapeshots; bear them, still hot (or seemingly so), to the Hôtel-de-Ville:—Paris, you perceive, is to be burnt! Flesselles is “pale to the very lips,” for the roar of the multitude grows deep. Paris wholly has got to the acme of its frenzy; whirled, all ways, by panic madness. At every street barricade, there whirls simmering a minor whirlpool,—strengthening the barricade, since God knows what is coming; and all minor whirlpools play distractedly into that grand Fire-Mahlstrom which is lashing round the Bastille.

And so it lashes and it roars. Cholat the wine-merchant has become an impromptu cannoneer. See Georget, of the Marine Service, fresh from Brest, ply

the King of Siam's cannon. Singular (if we were not used to the like): Georget lay, last night, taking his ease at his inn ; the King of Siam's cannon also lay, knowing nothing of *him*, for a hundred years. Yet now at the right instant, they have got together, and discourse eloquent music. For, hearing what was toward, Georget sprang from the Brest Diligence, and ran. Gardes Françaises also will be here, with real artillery : were not the walls so thick !—Upwards from the Esplanade, horizontally from all neighbouring roofs and windows, flashes one irregular deluge of musketry, without effect. The Invalides lie flat, firing comparatively at their ease from behind stone ; hardly through portholes, show the tip of a nose. We fall, shot ; and make no impression !

Let conflagration rage ; of whatsoever is combustible ! Guard-rooms are burnt, Invalides mess-rooms. A distracted “Peruke-maker with two fiery torches” is for burning “the saltpetres of the Arsenal ;”—had not a woman run screaming ; had not a Patriot, with some tincture of Natural Philosophy, instantly struck the wind out of him (butt of musket on pit of stomach), overturned barrels, and stayed the devouring element. A young beautiful lady, seized escaping in these Outer Courts, and thought falsely to be De Launay's daughter, shall be burnt in De Launay's sight ; she lies swooned on a pailasse : but again a Patriot, it is brave Aubin Bonnemère the old soldier, dashes in, and rescues her. Straw is burnt ; three cartloads of it, hauled thither, go up in white smoke : almost to the choking of Patriotism itself ; so that Elie had, with singed brows, to drag back one cart ; and Réole the “gigantic haberdasher” another. Smoke as of Tophet ; confusion as of Babel ; noise as of the Crack of Doom !

Blood flows ; the aliment of new madness. The wounded are carried into houses of the Rue Cerisaie ; the dying leave their last mandate not to yield till the accursed Stronghold fall. And yet, alas, how fall ? The walls are so thick ! Deputations, three in number, arrive from the Hôtel-de-Ville ; Abbé Fauchet (who was

of one) can say, with what almost superhuman courage of benevolence. These wave their Town-flag in the arched Gateway ; and stand, rolling their drum ; but to no purpose. In such Crack of Doom, De Launay cannot hear them, dare not believe them : they return, with justified rage, the whew of lead still singing in their ears. What to do ? The Firemen are here, squirting with their fire-pumps on the Invalides cannon, to wet the touchholes ; they unfortunately cannot squirt so high ; but produce only clouds of spray. Individuals of classical knowledge propose *catapults*. Santerre, the sonorous Brewer of the Suburb Saint-Antoine, advises rather that the place be fired, by a "mixture of phosphorus and oil-of-turpentine spouted up through forcing pumps :" O Spinola-Santerre, hast thou the mixture *ready* ? Every man his own engineer ! And still the fire-deluge abates not : even women are firing, and Turks ; at least one woman (with her sweetheart), and one Turk. Gardes Françaises have come : real cannon, real cannoneers. Usher Maillard is busy ; half-pay Elie, half-pay Hulin rage in the midst of thousands.

How the great Bastille Clock ticks (inaudible) in its Inner Court there, at its ease, hour after hour ; as if nothing special, for it or the world, were passing ! It tolled One when the firing began ; and is now pointing towards Five, and still the firing slakes not.—Far down, in their vaults, the seven Prisoners hear muffled din as of earthquakes ; their Turnkeys answer vaguely.

Wo to thee, De Launay, with thy poor hundred Invalides ! Broglie is distant, and his ears heavy : Besenval hears, but can send no help. One poor troop of Hussars has crept, reconnoitering, cautiously along the Quais, as far as the Pont Neuf. "We are come to join you," said the Captain ; for the crowd seems shoreless. A large-headed dwarfish individual, of smoke-bleared aspect, shambles forward, opening his blue lips, for there is sense in him ; and croaks : "Alight then, and give up your arms !" The Hussar-Captain is too happy to be escorted to the Barriers, and dismissed on parole. Who the squat individual was ? Men

answer, It is M. Marat, author of the excellent pacific *Avis au Peuple!* Great truly, O thou remarkable Dog-leech, is this thy day of emergence and new-birth ; and yet this same day come four years— !—But let the curtains of the Future hang.

What shall De Launay do ? One thing only De Launay could have done : what he said he would do. Fancy him sitting, from the first, with lighted taper, within arm's length of the Powder-Magazine ; motionless, like old Roman Senator, or Bronze Lampholder ; coldly apprising Thuriot, and all men, by a slight motion of his eye, what his resolution was :—Harmless he sat there, while unharmed ; but the King's Fortress, meanwhile, could, might, would, or should, in nowise be surrendered, save to the King's Messenger : one old man's life is worthless, so it be lost with honour ; but think, ye brawling *canaille*, how will it be when a whole Bastille springs skyward !—In such statuesque, taper-holding attitude, one fancies De Launay might have left Thuriot, the red Clerks of the Basoche, Curé of Saint-Stephen and all the tag-rag-and-bobtail of the world, to work their will.

And yet, withal, he could not do it. Hast thou considered how each man's heart is so tremulously responsive to the hearts of all men ; hast thou noted how omnipotent is the very sound of many men ? How their shriek of indignation palsies the strong soul ; their howl of contumely withers with unfelt pangs ? The Ritter Gluck confessed that the ground-tone of the noblest passage, in one of his noblest Operas, was the voice of the Populace he had heard at Vienna, crying to their Kaiser : Bread ! Bread ! Great is the combined voice of men ; the utterance of their *instincts* which are truer than their *thoughts* : it is the greatest a man encounters, among the sounds and shadows which make up this World of Time. He who can resist that, has his footing somewhere *beyond* Time. De Launay could not do it. Distracted, he hovers between two ; hopes in the middle of despair ; surrenders not his Fortress ; declares that he will blow it up, seizes torches to blow it

up, and does not blow it. Unhappy old De Launay, it is the death-agony of thy Bastille and thee ! Jail, Jailoring and Sailor, all three, such as they may have been, must finish.

For four hours now has the World-Bedlam roared : call it the World-Chimæra, blowing fire ! The poor Invalides have sunk under their battlements, or rise only with reversed muskets : they have made a white flag of napkins ; go beating the *chamade*, or seeming to beat, for one can hear nothing. The very Swiss at the Portcullis look weary of firing ; disheartened in the fire-deluge : a porthole at the drawbridge is opened, as by one that would speak. See Huissier Maillard, the shifty man ! On his plank, swinging over the abyss of that stone Ditch ; plank resting on parapet, balanced by weight of Patriots,—he hovers perilous : such a Dove towards such an Ark ! Deftly, thou shifty Usher : one man already fell ; and lies smashed, far down there, against the masonry ; Usher Maillard falls not : deftly, unerring he walks, with outspread palm. The Swiss holds a paper through his porthole ; the shifty Usher snatches it, and returns. Terms of surrender : Pardon, immunity to all ! Are they accepted ?—“ *Foi d'officier*, On the word of an officer,” answers half-pay Hulin,—or half-pay Elie, for men do not agree on it, “ they are ! ” Sinks the drawbridge,—Usher Maillard bolting it when down ; rushes-in the living deluge : the Bastille is fallen ! *Victoire ! La Bastille est prise !*

## V

## THE GENERAL OVERTURN

(VOL. I, BOOK VI, CHAPTER III)

BUT over France, there goes on the indisputablest “ destruction of formulas ; ” transaction of realities that follow therefrom. So many millions of persons, all gyved, and nigh strangled, with formulas ; whose Life nevertheless, at least the digestion and hunger of it,

was real enough ! Heaven has at length sent an abundant harvest : but what profits it the poor man, when Earth with her formulas interposes ? Industry, in these times of insurrection, must needs lie dormant ; capital, as usual, not circulating, but stagnating timorously in nooks. The poor man is short of work, is therefore short of money ; nay even had he money, bread is not to be bought for it. Were it plotting of Aristocrats, plotting of D'Orleans ; were it Brigands, preternatural terror, and the clang of Phœbus Apollo's silver bow,—enough, the markets are scarce of grain, plentiful only in tumult. Farmers seem lazy to thresh ;—being either “bribed ;” or needing no bribe, with prices ever rising, with perhaps rent itself no longer pressing. Neither, what is singular, do municipal enactments, “That along with so many measures of wheat you shall sell so many of rye,” and other the like, much mend the matter. Dragoons with drawn swords stand ranked among the corn-sacks, often more dragoons than sacks. Meal-mobs abound ; growing into mobs of a still darker quality.

Starvation has been known among the French Commonalty before this ; known and familiar. Did we not see them, in the year 1775, presenting, in sallow faces, in wretchedness and raggedness, their Petition of Grievances ; and, for answer, getting a brand-new Gallows forty feet high ? Hunger and Darkness, through long years ! For look back on that earlier Paris Riot, when a Great Personage, worn out by debauchery, was believed to be in want of Blood-baths ; and Mothers, in worn raiment, yet with living hearts under it, “filled the public places” with their wild Rachel-cries,—stilled also by the Gallows. Twenty years ago, the Friend of Men (preaching to the deaf) described the Limousin Peasants as wearing a pain-stricken (*souffre-douleur*) look, a look *past* complaint, “as if the oppression of the great were like the hail and the thunder, a thing irremediable, the ordinance of Nature.” And now if in some great hour, the shock of a falling Bastille should awaken you ; and it were found to be the ordinance of Art merely ; and remediable, reversible !

Or has the Reader forgotten that "flood of savages," which, in sight of the same Friend of Men, descended from the mountains at Mont d'Or? Lank-haired haggard faces; shapes rawboned, in high sabots; in woollen jupes, with leather girdles studded with copper-nails! They rocked from foot to foot, and beat time with their elbows too, as the quarrel and battle, which was not long in beginning, went on; shouting fiercely; the lank faces distorted into the similitude of a cruel laugh. For they were darkened and hardened: long had they been the prey of excise-men and tax-men; of "clerks with the cold spurt of their pen." It was the fixed prophecy of our old Marquis, which no man would listen to, that "such Government by Blind-man's-buff, stumbling along too far, would end by the General Overturn, the *Culbute Générale!*"

No man would listen, each went his thoughtless way;—and Time and Destiny also travelled on. The Government by Blind-man's-buff, stumbling along, has reached the precipice inevitable for it. Dull Drudgery, driven on, by clerks with the old dastard spurt of their pen, has been driven—into a Communion of Drudges! For now, moreover, there have come the strangest confused tidings; by Paris Journals with their paper wings; or still more portentous, where no Journals are, by rumour and conjecture: Oppression *not* inevitable; a Bastille prostrate, and the Constitution fast getting ready! Which Constitution, if it be something and not nothing, what can it be but bread to eat?

The Traveller, "walking up hill bridle in hand," overtakes "a poor woman;" the image, as such commonly are, of drudgery and scarcity; "looking sixty years of age, though she is not yet twenty-eight." They have seven children, her poor drudge and she: a farm, with one cow, which helps to make the children soup; also one little horse, or garron. They have rents and quit-rents, Hens to pay to this Seigneur, Oat-sacks to that; King's taxes, Statute-labour, Church-taxes, taxes enough;—and think the times inexpressible. She has heard that somewhere, in some manner, something is to

be done for the poor: “God send it soon; for the dues and taxes crush us down (*nous écrasent*)!”

Fair prophecies are spoken, but they are not fulfilled. There have been Notables, Assemblages, turnings out and comings in. Intriguing and manœuvring; Parliamentary eloquence and arguing, Greek meeting Greek in high places, has long gone on; yet still bread comes not. The harvest is reaped and garnered; yet still we have no bread. Urged by despair and by hope, what can Drudgery do, but rise, as predicted, and produce the General Overturn?

Fancy, then, some Five full-grown Millions of such gaunt figures, with their haggard faces (*figures hâves*); in woollen jupes, with copper-studded leather girths, and high sabots,—starting up to ask, as in forest-roarings, their washed Upper-Classes, after long unreviewed centuries, virtually this question: How have ye treated us; how have ye taught us, fed us, and led us, while we toiled for you? The answer can be read in flames, over the nightly summer-sky. *This* is the feeding and leading we have had of you: *EMPTINESS*,—of pocket, of stomach, of head and of heart. Behold there is *nothing in us*: nothing but what Nature gives her wild children of the desert: Ferocity and Appetite; Strength grounded on Hunger. Did ye mark among your Rights of Man, that man was not to die of starvation, while there was bread reaped by him? It is among the Mights of Man.

Seventy-two Châteaus have flamed aloft in the Mâconnais and Beaujolais alone: this seems the centre of the conflagration; but it has spread over Dauphiné, Alsace, the Lyonnais; the whole South-East is in a blaze. All over the North, from Rouen to Metz, disorder is abroad: smugglers of salt go openly in armed bands: the barriers of towns are burnt; toll-gatherers, tax-gatherers, official persons put to flight. “It was thought,” says Young, “the people, from hunger, would revolt;” and we see they have done it. Desperate Lackalls, long prowling aimless, now finding hope in desperation itself, everywhere form a nucleus.

They ring the Church-bell by way of tocsin : and the Parish turns out to the work. Ferocity, atrocity ; hunger and revenge ; such work as we can imagine !

Ill stands it now with the Seigneur, who, for example, "has walled up the only Fountain of the Township ;" who has ridden high on his *chartier* and parchments ; who has preserved Game not wisely but too well. Churches also, and Canonries, are sacked, without mercy ; which have shorn the flock too close, forgetting to feed it. Wo to the land over which Sansculottism, in its day of vengeance, tramps rough-shod,—shod in sabots ! Highbred Seigneurs, with their delicate women and little ones, had to "fly half-naked," under cloud of night : glad to escape the flames, and even worse. You meet them at the *tables-d'hôte* of inns ; making wise reflexions or foolish, that "rank is destroyed ;" uncertain whither they shall now wend. The *métayer* will find it convenient to be slack in paying rent. As for the Tax-gatherer, he, long hunting as a biped of prey, may now find himself hunted as one ; his Majesty's Exchequer will not "fill up the Deficit," this season : it is the notion of many that a Patriot Majesty, being the Restorer of French Liberty, has abolished most taxes, though, for their private ends, some men make a secret of it.

Where this will end ? In the Abyss, one may prophesy ; whither all Delusions are, at all moments, travelling ; where this Delusion has now arrived. For if there be a Faith, from of old, it is this, as we often repeat, that no Lie can live forever. The very Truth has to change its vesture, from time to time ; and be born again. But all Lies have sentence of death written down against them, in Heaven's Chancery itself ; and, slowly or fast, advance incessantly towards their hour. "The sign of a Grand Seigneur being landlord," says the vehement plain-spoken Arthur Young, "are wastes, *landes*, deserts, ling : go to his residence, you will find it in the middle of a forest, peopled with deer, wild boars and wolves. The fields are scenes of pitiable management, as the houses are of misery. To see so many

millions of hands, that would be industrious, all idle and starving : Oh, if I were legislator of France for one day, I would make these great lords skip again ! ” O Arthur, thou now actually beholdest them *skip* :—wilt thou grow to grumble at that too ?

For long years and generations it lasted ; but the time came. Featherbrain, whom no reasoning and no pleading could touch, the glare of the firebrand had to illuminate : there remained but that method. Consider it, look at it ! The widow is gathering nettles for her children’s dinner ; a perfumed Seigneur, delicately lounging in the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, has an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and name it Rent and Law: such an arrangement must end. Ought it not ? But, O most fearful is *such* an ending ! Let those, to whom God, in his great mercy, has granted time and space, prepare another and milder one.

## VI

### THE DEATH OF MIRABEAU

(VOL. II, BOOK III, CHAP. VI-VII)

DIN of battles, wars more than civil, confusion from above and from below : in such environment the eye of Prophecy sees Comte de Mirabeau, like some Cardinal de Retz, stormfully maintain himself ; with head all-devising, heart all-daring, if not victorious, yet unvanquished, while life is left him. The specialities and issues of it, no eye of Prophecy can guess at : it is clouds, we repeat, and tempestuous night ; and in the middle of it, now visible, far-darting, now labouring in eclipse, is Mirabeau indomitably struggling to be Cloud-Compeller !—One can say that, had Mirabeau lived, the History of France and of the World had been different. Further, that the man would have needed, as few men ever did, the whole compass of that same

"Art of Daring, *Art l'Oser*," which he so prized ; and likewise that he, above all men then living, would have practised and manifested it. Finally, that some substantiality, and no empty simulacrum of a formula, would have been the result realised by him : a result you could have loved, a result you could have hated ; by no likelihood, a result you could only have rejected with closed lips, and swept into quick forgetfulness forever. Had Mirabeau lived one other year !

But Mirabeau could not live another year, any more than he could live another thousand years. Men's years are numbered, and the tale of Mirabeau's was now complete. Important or unimportant ; to be mentioned in World-History for some centuries, or not to be mentioned there beyond a day or two,—it matters not to peremptory Fate. From amid the press of ruddy busy Life, the Pale Messenger beckons silently ; wide-spreading interests, projects, salvation of French Monarchies ; what thing soever man has on hand, he must suddenly quit it all, and go. Wert thou saving French Monarchies ; wert thou blacking shoes on the Pont Neuf ! The most important of men cannot stay ; did the World's History depend on an hour, that hour is not to be given. Whereby, indeed, it comes that these same *would-have-beens* are mostly a vanity ; and the World's History could never in the least be what it would, or might, or should, by any manner of potentiality, but simply and altogether what it *is*.

The fierce wear and tear of such an existence has wasted out the giant oaken strength of Mirabeau. A fret and fever that keeps heart and brain on fire : excess of effort, of excitement ; excess of all kinds : labour incessant, almost beyond credibility ! "If I had not lived with him," says Dumont, "I never should have known what a man can make of one day ; what things may be placed within the interval of twelve hours. A day for this man was more than a week or a month is for others : the mass of things he guided on together was prodigious ; from the scheming to the executing not a

moment lost."—"Monsieur le Comte," said his Secretary to him once, "what you require is impossible."—"Impossible!"—answered he, starting from his chair, "*Ne me dites jamais ce bête de mot*, Never name to me that blockhead of a word." And then the social repasts; the dinner which he gives as Commandant of National Guards, which "cost five hundred pounds;" alas, and "the Syrens of the Opera;" and all the ginger that is hot in the mouth:—down what a course is this man hurled! Cannot Mirabeau stop; cannot he fly, and save himself alive? No! There is a Nessus' Shirt on this Hercules; he must storm and burn there, without rest, till he be consumed. Human strength, never so Herculean, has its measure. Herald shadows flit pale across the fire-brain of Mirabeau; heralds of the pale repose. While he tosses and storms, straining every nerve, in that sea of ambition and confusion, there comes, sombre and still, a monition that for him the issue of it will be swift death.

In January last, you might see him as President of the Assembly; "his neck wrapt in linen cloths, at the evening session:" there was sick heat of the blood, alternate darkening and flashing in the eyesight; he had to apply leeches, after the morning labour, and preside bandaged. "At parting he embraced me," says Dumont, "with an emotion I had never seen in him: 'I am dying, my friend; dying as by slow fire; we shall perhaps not meet again. When I am gone, they will know what the value of me was. The miseries I have held back will burst from all sides on France.'" Sickness gives louder warning; but cannot be listened to. On the 27th day of March, proceeding towards the Assembly, he had to seek rest and help in Friend de Lamarck's, by the road; and lay there, for an hour, half-fainted, stretched on a sofa. To the Assembly nevertheless he went, as if in spite of Destiny itself; spoke, loud and eager, five several times; then quitted the Tribune—forever. He steps out, utterly exhausted, into the Tuileries Gardens; many people press round him, as usual, with applications, memorials; he says to

the Friend who was with him: "Take me out of this!"

And so, on the last day of March 1791, endless anxious multitudes beset the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin; incessantly inquiring; within doors there, in that House numbered, in our time, 42, the overwearied giant has fallen down, to die. Crowds of all parties and kinds; of all ranks from the King to the meanest man! The King sends publicly twice a day to inquire; privately besides: from the world at large there is no end of inquiring. "A written bulletin is handed out every three hours," is copied and circulated; in the end, it is printed. The People spontaneously keep silence; no carriage shall enter with its noise: there is crowding pressure, but the Sister of Mirabeau is reverently recognised, and has free way made for her. The People stand mute, heart-stricken; to all it seems as if a great calamity were nigh: as if the last man of France, who could have swayed these coming troubles, lay there at hand-grips with the unearthly Power.

The silence of a whole People, the wakeful toil of Cabanis, Friend and Physician, skills not: on Saturday, the second day of April, Mirabeau feels that the last of the Days has risen for him; that on this day he has to depart and be no more. His death is Titanic, as his life has been! Lit up, for the last time, in the glare of coming dissolution, the mind of the man is all glowing and burning; utters itself in sayings, such as men long remember. He longs to live, yet acquiesces in death, argues not with the inexorable. His speech is wild and wondrous: unearthly Phantasms dancing now their torch-dance round his soul; the soul itself looking out fire-radiant, motionless, girt together for that great hour! At times comes a beam of light from him on the world he is quitting. "I carry in my heart the death-dirge of the French Monarchy; the dead remains of it will now be the spoil of the factious." Or again, when we heard the cannon fire, what is characteristic too: "Have we the Achilles' Funeral already?" So likewise, while some friend is supporting him: "Yes, support

that head ; would I could bequeath it thee ! ” For the man dies as he has lived ; self-conscious, conscious of a world looking on. He gazes forth on the young Spring, which for him will never be Summer. The Sun has risen ; he says, “ *Si ce n'est pas là Dieu, c'est du moins son cousin germain.* ”—Death has mastered the outworks ; power of speech is gone ; the citadel of the heart still holding out : the moribund giant, passionately, by sign, demands paper and pen ; writes his passionate demand for opium, to end these agonies. The sorrowful Doctor shakes his head : *Dormir*, “ To sleep,” writes the other, passionately pointing at it ! So dies a gigantic Heathen and Titan ; stumbling blindly, undismayed, down to his rest. At half-past eight in the morning, Doctor Petit, standing at the foot of the bed, says, “ *Il ne souffre plus.* ” His suffering and his working are now ended.

Even so, ye silent Patriot multitudes, all ye men of France ; this man is rapt away from you. He has fallen suddenly, without bending till he broke ; as a tower falls, smitten by sudden lightning. His word ye shall hear no more, his guidance follow no more.—The multitudes depart, heartstruck ; spread the sad tidings. How touching is the loyalty of men to their Sovereign Man ! All theatres, public amusements close ; no joyful meeting can be held in these nights, joy is not for them : the People break in upon private dancing-parties, and sullenly command that they cease. Of such dancing-parties apparently but two came to light ; and these also have gone out. The gloom is universal ; never in this City was such sorrow for one death ; never since that old night when Louis XII. departed, “ and the *Crieurs des Corps* went sounding their bells, and crying along the streets : *Le bon roi Louis, père du peuple, est mort,* The good King Louis, Father of the People, is dead ! ” King Mirabeau is now the lost King ; and one may say with little exaggeration, all the People mourns for him.

For three days there is low wide moan ; weeping in the National Assembly itself. The streets are all mournful ; orators mounted on the *bornes*, with large silent audience, preaching the funeral sermon of the

dead. Let no coachman whip fast, distractively with his rolling wheels, or almost at all, through these groups! His traces may be cut; himself and his fare, as incurable Aristocrats, hurled sulkily into the kennels. The bourne-stone orators speak as it is given them; the Sansculottic People, with its rude soul, listens eager,—as men will to any Sermon, or *Sermo*, when it is a spoken Word meaning a Thing, and not a Babblement meaning No-thing. In the Restaurateur's of the Palais-Royal, the waiter remarks, "Fine weather, Monsieur;"—"Yes, my friend," answers the ancient Man of Letters, "very fine; but Mirabeau is dead." Hoarse rhythmic threnodies come also from the throats of ballad-singers; are sold on gray-white paper at a *sou* each. But of Portraits, engraved, painted, hewn and written; of Eulogies, Reminiscences, Biographies, nay *Vaudevilles*, Dramas and Melodramas, in all Provinces of France, there will, through these coming months, be the due immeasurable crop; thick as the leaves of Spring. Nor, that a tincture of burlesque might be in it, is Gobel's Episcopal *Mandement* wanting; goose Gobel, who has just been made Constitutional Bishop of Paris. A *Mandement* wherein *Ça ira* alternates very strangely with *Nomine Domini*; and you are, with a grave countenance, invited to "rejoice at possessing in the midst of you a body of Prelates created by Mirabeau, zealous followers of his doctrine, faithful imitators of his virtues." So speaks, and cackles manifold, the Sorrow of France; wailing articulately, inarticulately, as it can, that a Sovereign Man is snatched away. In the National Assembly, when difficult questions are astir, all eyes will "turn mechanically to the place where Mirabeau sat,"—and Mirabeau is absent now.

On the third evening of the lamentation, the fourth of April, there is solemn Public Funeral; such as deceased mortal seldom had. Procession of a league in length; of mourners reckoned loosely at a hundred thousand. All roofs are thronged with onlookers, all windows, lamp-irons, branches of trees. "Sadness is painted on every countenance; many persons weep." There is

double hedge of National Guards ; there is National Assembly in a body ; Jacobin Society, and Societies ; King's Ministers, Municipals, and all Notabilities, Patriot or Aristocrat. Bouillé is noticeable there, "with his hat on ;" say, hat drawn over his brow, hiding many thoughts ! Slow-wending, in religious silence, the Procession of a league in length, under the level sun-rays, for it is five o'clock, moves and marches : with its sable plumes ; itself in a religious silence ; but, by fits with the muffled roll of drums, by fits with some long-drawn wail of music, and strange new clangour of trombones, and metallic dirge-voice ; amid the infinite hum of men. In the Church of Saint-Eustache, there is funeral oration by Cerutti ; and discharge of fire-arms, which "brings down pieces of the plaster." Thence, forward again to the Church of Sainte-Geneviève ; which has been consecrated, by supreme decree, on the spur of this time, into a Pantheon for the Great Men of the Fatherland, *Aux Grands Hommes la Patrie reconnaissante*. Hardly at midnight is the business done ; and Mirabeau left in his dark dwelling : first tenant of that Fatherland's Pantheon.

Tenant, alas, who inhabits but at will, and shall be cast out. For, in these days of convulsion and dissection, not even the dust of the dead is permitted to rest. Voltaire's bones are, by and by, to be carried from their stolen grave in the Abbey of Scellières, to an eager *stealing* grave, in Paris his birth-city : all mortals processioning and perorating there ; cars drawn by eight white horses, goadsters in classical costume, with fillets and wheat-ears enough,—though the weather is of the wettest. Evangelist Jean Jacques too, as is most proper, must be dug up from Ermenonville, and processioned, with pomp, with sensibility, to the Pantheon of the Fatherland. He and others : while again Mirabeau, we say, is cast forth from it, happily incapable of being *replaced* ; and rests now, irrecognisable, reburied hastily at dead of night "in the central part of the Churchyard Sainte-Catherine, in the Suburb Saint-Marceau," to be disturbed no further.

## VII

## THE FLIGHT TO VARENNES

(VOL. II, BOOK IV, CHAP. III-VII)

## (i) COUNT FERSEN

ON Monday night, the Twentieth of June 1791, about eleven o'clock, there is many a hackney-coach, and glass-coach (*carrosse de remise*), still rumbling, or at rest, on the streets of Paris. But of all glass-coaches, we recommend this to thee, O Reader, which stands drawn up in the Rue de l'Echelle, hard by the Carrousel and outgate of the Tuilleries; in the Rue de l'Echelle that then was; "opposite Ronsin the saddler's door," as if waiting for a fare there! Not long does it wait: a hooded Dame, with two hooded Children, has issued from Villequier's door, where no sentry walks, into the Tuilleries Court-of-Princes; into the Carrousel; into the Rue de l'Echelle; where the Glass-coachman readily admits them; and again waits. Not long; another Dame, likewise hooded or shrouded, leaning on a servant, issues in the same manner; bids the servant good night; and is, in the same manner, by the Glass-coachman, cheerfully admitted. Whither go so many Dames? 'Tis his Majesty's *Couchée*, Majesty just gone to bed, and all the Palace-world is retiring home. But the Glass-coachman still waits; his fare seemingly incomplete.

By and by, we note a thickset Individual, in round hat and periuke, arm-and-arm with some servant, seemingly of the Runner or Courier sort; he also issues through Villequier's door; starts a shoebuckle as he passes one of the sentries, stoops down to clasp it again; is however, by the Glass-coachman, still more cheerfully admitted. And now, is his fare complete? Not yet; the Glass-coachman still waits.—Alas! and the false Chambermaid has warned Gouvier that she thinks the Royal Family will fly this very night; and

Gouvion, distrusting his own glazed eyes, has sent express for Lafayette; and Lafayette's Carriage, flaring with lights, rolls this moment through the inner Arch of the Carrousel,—where a Lady shaded in broad gypsy-hat, and leaning on the arm of a servant, also of the Runner or Courier sort, stands aside to let it pass, and has even the whim to touch a spoke of it with her *badine*,—light little magic rod which she calls *badine*, such as the Beautiful then wore. The flare of Lafayette's Carriage rolls past: all is found quiet in the Court-of-Princes; sentries at their post; Majesties' Apartments closed in smooth rest. Your false Chamber-maid must have been mistaken? Watch thou, Gouvion, with Argus' vigilance; for, of a truth, treachery is within these walls.

But where is the Lady that stood aside in gypsy-hat, and touched the wheel-spoke with her *badine*? O Reader, that Lady that touched the wheel-spoke was the Queen of France! She has issued safe through that inner Arch, into the Carrousel itself; but not into the Rue de l'Echelle. Flurried by the rattle and encounter, she took the right hand not the left; neither she nor her Courier knows Paris; he indeed is no Courier, but a loyal stupid *ci-devant* Bodyguard disguised as one. They are off, quite wrong, over the Pont Royal and River; roaming disconsolate in the Rue du Bac; far from the Glass-coachman, who still waits. Waits, with flutter of heart; with thoughts—which he must button close up, under his jarvie-surtout!

Midnight clangs from all the City-steeple; one precious hour has been spent so; most mortals are asleep. The Glass-coachman waits; and in what mood! A brother jarvie drives up, enters into conversation; is answered cheerfully in jarvie-dialect: the brothers of the whip exchange a pinch of snuff; decline drinking together, and part with good night. Be the Heavens blest! here at length is the Queen-lady, in gypsy-hat; safe after perils; who has had to inquire her way. She too is admitted; her Courier jumps aloft, as the other, who is also a disguised Bodyguard, has done:

and now, O Glass-coachman of a thousand,—Count Fersen, for the Reader sees it is thou,—drive !

Dust shall not stick to the hoofs of Fersen : crack ! crack ! the Glass-coach rattles, and every soul breathes lighter. But is Fersen on the right road ? Northeastward, to the Barrier of Saint-Martin and Metz Highway, thither were we bound : and lo, he drives right Northward ! The royal Individual, in round hat and peruke, sits astonished ; but right or wrong, there is no remedy. Crack, crack, we go incessant, through the slumbering City. Seldom, since Paris rose out of mud, or the Longhaired Kings went in Bullock-carts, was there such a drive. Mortals on each hand of you, close by, stretched out horizontal, dormant ; and we alive and quaking ! Crack, crack, through the Rue de Grammont ; across the Boulevard ; up the Rue de la Chausée d'Antin,—these windows, all silent, of Number 42, were Mirabeau's. Towards the Barrier not of Saint-Martin, but of Clichy on the utmost North ! Patience, ye royal Individuals ; Fersen understands what he is about. Passing up the Rue de Clichy, he alights for one moment at Madame Sullivan's : "Did Count Fersen's Coachman get the Baroness de Korff's new Berline ?"—"Gone with it an hour-and-half ago," grumbles responsive the drowsy Porter.—"C'est bien." Yes, it is well ;—though had not such hour-and-half been *lost*, it were still better. Forth therefore, O Fersen, fast, by the Barrier de Clichy ; then Eastward along the Outer Boulevard, what horses and whipecord can do !

Thus Fersen drives, through the ambrosial night. Sleeping Paris is now all on the right-hand of him ; silent except for some snoring hum : and now he is Eastward as far as the Barrier de Saint-Martin ; looking earnestly for Baroness de Korff's Berline. This Heaven's Berline he at length does descry, drawn up with its six horses, his own German Coachman waiting on the box. Right, thou good German : now haste, whither thou knowest !—And as for us of the Glass-coach, haste too, O haste ; much time is already lost !

The august Glass-coach fare, six Insides, hastily packs itself into the new Berline ; two Bodyguard Couriers behind. The Glass-coach itself is turned adrift, its head towards the City ; to wander whither it lists,—and be found next morning tumbled in a ditch. But Fersen is on the new box, with its brave new hammer-cloths ; flourishing his whip ; he bolts forward towards Bondy. There a third and final Bodyguard Courier of ours ought surely to be, with post-horses ready-ordered. There likewise ought that purchased Chaise, with the two Waiting-maids and their band-boxes, to be ; whom also her Majesty could not travel without Swift, thou deft Fersen, and may the Heavens turn it well !

Once more, by Heaven's blessing, it is all well. Here is the sleeping Hamlet of Bondy ; Chaise with Waiting-women ; horses all ready, and postilions with their churn-boots, impatient in the dewy dawn. Brief harnessing done, the postilions with their churn-boots vault into the saddles ; brandish circularly their little noisy whips. Fersen, under his jarvie-surtout, bends in lowly silent reverence of adieu ; royal hands wave speechless inexpressible response ; Baroness de Korff's Berline, with the Royalty of France, bounds off : forever, as it proved. Deft Fersen dashes obliquely Northward, through the country, towards Bougret ; gains Bougret, finds his German Coachman and chariot waiting there ; cracks off, and drives undiscovered into unknown space. A deft active man, we say ; what he undertook to do is nimbly and successfully done.

And so the Royalty of France is actually fled ? This precious night, the shortest of the year, it flies, and drives ! *Baroness de Korff* is, at bottom, Dame de Tourzel, Governess of the Royal Children : she who came hooded with the two hooded little ones ; little Dauphin ; little Madame Royale, known long afterwards as Duchesse d'Angoulême. Baroness de Korff's *Waiting-maid* is the Queen in gypsy-hat. The royal Individual in round hat and peruke, he is *Valet* for the time being. That other hooded Dame, styled *Travelling-*

*Companion*, is kind Sister Elizabeth ; she had sworn, long since, when the Insurrection of Women was, that only death should part her and them. And so they rush there, not too impetuously, through the Wood of Bondy :—over a Rubicon in their own and France's History.

Great ; though the future is all vague ! If we reach Bouillé ? If we do not reach him ? O Louis ! and this all round thee is the great slumbering Earth (and overhead, the great watchful Heaven) ; the slumbering Wood of Bondy,—where Longhaired Childeric Do-nothing was struck through with iron ; not unreasonably, in a world like ours. These peaked stone-towers are Raincy ; towers of wicked D'Orleans. All slumbers save the multiplex rustle of our new Berline. Loose-skirted scarecrow of an Herb-merchant, with his ass and early greens, toilsomely plodding, seems the only creature we meet. But right ahead the great Northeast sends up evermore his gray brindled dawn : from dewy branch, birds here and there, with short deep warble, salute the coming Sun. Stars fade out, and Galaxies ; Street-lamps of the City of God. The Universe, O my brothers, is flinging wide its portals for the Levee of the GREAT HIGH KING. Thou, poor King Louis, farest nevertheless, as mortals do, towards Orient lands of Hope ; and the Tuileries with *its* Levees, and France and the Earth itself, is but a larger kind of doghutch,—occasionally going rabid.

### (ii) ATTITUDE

BUT in Paris, at six in the morning ; when some Patriot Deputy, warned by a billet, awoke Lafayette, and they went to the Tuileries ?—Imagination may paint, but words cannot, the surprise of Lafayette ; or with what bewilderment helpless Gouvion rolled glassy Argus' eyes, discerning now that his false Chambermaid had told true !

However, it is to be recorded that Paris, thanks to an august National Assembly, did, on this seeming dooms-

day, surpass itself. Never, according to Historian eyewitnesses, was there seen such an "imposing attitude." Sections all "in permanence ;" our Townhall too, having first, about ten o'clock, fired three solemn alarm-cannons : above all, our National Assembly ! National Assembly, likewise permanent, decides what is needful ; with unanimous consent, for the *Côté Droit* sits dumb, afraid of the Lanterne. Decides with a calm promptitude, which rises towards the sublime. One must needs vote, for the thing is self-evident, that his Majesty has been *abducted*, or spirited away, "*enlevé*," by some person or persons unknown : in which case, what will the Constitution have us do ? Let us return to first principles, as we always say : "*revenons aux principes.*"

By first or by second principles, much is promptly decided : Ministers are sent for, instructed how to continue their functions ; Lafayette is examined ; and Gouvion, who gives a most helpless account, the best he can. Letters are found written : one Letter of immense magnitude ; all in his Majesty's hand, and evidently of his Majesty's own composition ; addressed to the National Assembly. It details, with earnestness, with a childlike simplicity, what woes his Majesty has suffered. Woes great and small : A Necker seen applauded, a Majesty not ; then insurrection ; want of due furniture in Tuileries Palace ; want of due cash in Civil List ; *general* want of cash, of furniture and order ; anarchy everywhere : Deficit never yet, in the smallest, "*choked or comblé* :—"—wherefore, in brief, his Majesty has retired towards a place of Liberty ; and, leaving Sanctions, Federation, and what Oaths there may be, to shift for themselves, does now refer—to what, thinks an august Assembly ? To that "*Declaration of the Twenty-third of June*," with its "*Seul il fera*, He alone will make his People happy." As if that were not buried, deep enough, under two irrevocable Twelve-months, and the wreck and rubbish of a whole Feudal World ! This strange autograph Letter the National Assembly decides on printing ; on transmitting to the Eighty-three Departments, with exegetic commentary, short but

pithy. Commissioners also shall go forth on all sides ; the People be exhorted ; the Armies be increased ; care taken that the Commonweal suffer no damage.—And now, with a sublime air of calmness, nay of indifference, we “ pass to the order of the day ! ”

By such sublime calmness, the terror of the People is calmed. These gleaming Pike-forests, which bristled fateful in the early sun, disappear again ; the far-sounding Street-orators cease, or spout milder. We are to have a civil war ; let us have it then. The King is gone ; but National Assembly, but France and we remain. The People also takes a great attitude ; the People also is calm ; motionless as a couchant lion. With but a few *broolings*, some waggings of the tail ; to show what it *will* do ! Cazalès, for instance, was beset by street-groups, and cries of *Lanterne* ; but National Patrols easily delivered him. Likewise all King’s effigies and statues, at least stucco ones, get abolished. Even King’s names ; the word *Roi* fades suddenly out of all shop-signs ; the Royal Bengal Tiger itself, on the Boulevards, becomes the National Bengal one, *Tigre National*.

How great is a calm couchant People ! On the morrow, men will say to one another : “ We have no King, yet we slept sound enough.” On the morrow, fervent Achille de Châtelet, and Thomas Paine the rebellious Needleman, shall have the walls of Paris profusely plastered with their Placard ; announcing that there must be a *Republic*.—Need we add, that Lafayette too, though at first menaced by Pikes, has taken a great attitude, or indeed the greatest of all ? Scouts and Aides-de-camp fly forth, vague, in quest and pursuit ; young Romœuf towards Valenciennes, though with small hope.

Thus Paris : sublimely calmed, in its bereavement. But from the *Messageries Royales*, in all Mail-bags, radiates forth far-darting the electric news : Our Hereditary Representative is flown. Laugh, black Royalists : yet be it in your sleeve only ; lest Patriotism notice, and waxing frantic, lower the *Lanterne* ! In Paris alone is

a sublime National Assembly with its calmness ; truly, other places must take it as they can : with open mouth and eyes ; with panic, cackling, with wrath, with conjecture. How each one of those dull leatherne Diligences, with its leatherne bag and “The King is fled,” furrows up smooth France as it goes : through town and hamlet, ruffles the smooth public mind into quivering agitation of death-terror ; then lumbers on, as if nothing had happened ! Along all highways ; towards the utmost borders ; till all France is ruffled,—roughened up (metaphorically speaking) into one enormous, desperate-minded, red guggling Turkey Cock !

For example, it is under cloud of night that the leatherne Monster reaches Nantes ; deep sunk in sleep. The word spoken rouses all Patriot men : General Dumouriez, enveloped in roquelaures, has to descend from his bedroom ; finds the street covered with “four or five thousand citizens in their shirts.” Here and there a faint farthing rushlight, hastily kindled ; and so many swart-featured haggard faces with nightcaps pushed back ; and the more or less flowing drapery of night-shirt : open-mouthed till the General say his word ! And overhead, as always, the Great Bear is turning so quiet round Boötes ; steady, indifferent as the leatherne Diligence itself. Take comfort, ye men of Nantes ; Boötes and the steady Bear are turning ; ancient Atlantic still sends his brine, loud-bellowing, up your Loire-stream ; brandy shall be hot in the stomach : this is not the Last of the Days, but one before the Last.—The fools ! If they knew what was doing, in these very instants, also by candlelight, in the far Northeast !

Perhaps, we may say, the most terrified man in Paris or France is—who thinks the Reader ?—seagreen Robespierre. Double paleness, with the shadow of gibbets and halters, overcasts the seagreen features : it is too clear to him that there is to be “a Saint-Bartholomew of Patriots,” that in four-and-twenty hours he will not be in life. These horrid anticipations of the soul he is heard uttering at Pétion’s : by a notable witness. By Madame Roland, namely ; her whom we saw, last year,

radiant at the Lyons Federation. These four months, the Rolands have been in Paris ; arranging with Assembly Committees the Municipal affairs of Lyons, affairs all sunk in debt ;—communing, the while, as was most natural, with the best Patriots to be found here, with our Brissots, Pétions, Buzots, Robespierres : who were wont to come to us, says the fair Hostess, four evenings in the week. They, running about, busier than ever this day, would fain have comforted the seagreen man ; spake of Achille de Châtelet's Placard ; of a Journal to be called *The Republican* ; of preparing men's minds for a Republic. “A Republic ?” said the Seagreen, with one of his dry husky *unsportful* laughs, “What is that ?” O seagreen Incorruptible, thou shalt see !

### (iii) THE NEW BERLINE

BUT scouts, all this while, and aides-de-camp, have flown forth faster than the leathern Diligences. Young Romœuf, as we said, was off early towards Valenciennes : distracted Villagers seize him, as a traitor with a finger of his own in the plot ; drag him back to the Townhall ; to the National Assembly, which speedily grants a new passport. Nay now, that same scarecrow of an Herb-merchant with his ass has bethought him of the grand new Berline seen in the Wood of Bondy ; and delivered evidence of it : Romœuf, furnished with new passport, is sent forth with double speed on a hopefuller track ; by Bondy, Claye and Chalons, towards Metz, to track the new Berline ; and gallops à *franc étrier*.

Miserable new Berline ! Why could not Royalty go in some old Berline similar to that of other men ? Flying for life, one does not stickle about his vehicle. Monsieur, in a commonplace travelling-carriage, is off Northwards ; Madame, his Princess, in another, with variation of route : they cross one another while changing horses, without look of recognition ; and reach Flanders, no man questioning them. Precisely in the same manner, beautiful Princess de Lamballe set

off, about the same hour ; and will reach England safe : —would she had continued there ! The beautiful, the good, but the unfortunate ; reserved for a frightful end !

All runs along, unmolested, speedy, except only the new Berline. Huge leatherne vehicle :—huge Argosy, let us say, or Acapulco-ship ; with its heavy stern-boat of Chaise-and-pair ; with its three yellow Pilot-boats of mounted Bodyguard Couriers, rocking aimless round it and ahead of it, to bewilder, not to guide ! It lumbers along, lurchingly with stress, at a snail's pace ; noted of all the world. The Bodyguard Couriers, in their yellow liveries, go prancing and clattering ; loyal but stupid ; unacquainted with all things. Stoppages occur ; and breakages, to be repaired at Etoges. King Louis too will dismount, will walk up hills, and enjoy the blessed sunshine :—with eleven horses and double drink-money, and all furtherances of Nature and Art, it will be found that Royalty, flying for life, accomplishes Sixty-nine miles in Twenty-two incessant hours. Slow Royalty ! And yet not a minute of these hours but is precious : on minutes hang the destinies of Royalty now.

Readers, therefore, can judge in what humour Duke de Choiseul might stand waiting, in the village of Pont-de-Sommerville, some leagues beyond Chalons, hour after hour, now when the day bends visibly westward. Choiseul drove out of Paris, in all privity, ten hours before their Majesties' fixed time ; his Hussars, led by Engineer Goguelat, are here duly, come “to escort a Treasure that is expected :” but, hour after hour, is no Baroness de Korff's Berline. Indeed, over all that Northeast Region, on the skirts of Champagne and of Lorraine, where the great Road runs, the agitation is considerable. For all along, from this Pont-de-Sommerville Northeastward as far as Montmédi, at Post-villages and Towns, escorts of Hussars and Dragoons do lounge waiting ; a train or chain of Military Escorts ; at the Montmédi end of it our brave Bouillé : an electric

thunder-chain ; which the invisible Bouillé, like a Father Jove, holds in his hand—for wise purposes ! Brave Bouillé has done what man could ; has spread out his electric thunder-chain of Military Escorts, onwards to the threshold of Chalons: it waits but for the new Korff Berline ; to receive it, escort it, and, if need be, bear it off in whirlwind of military fire. They lie and lounge there, we say, these fierce Troopers ; from Montmédi and Stenai, through Clermont, Sainte-Menehould to utmost Pont-de-Sommevelle, in all Post-villages ; for the route shall avoid Verdun and great Towns : they loiter impatient, “ till the Treasure arrive.”

Judge what a day this is for brave Bouillé: perhaps the first day of a new glorious life ; surely the last day of the old ! Also, and indeed still more, what a day, beautiful and terrible, for your young full-blooded Captains : your Dandoins, Comte de Damas, Duke de Choiseul, Engineer Goguelat, and the like ; entrusted with the secret !—Alas, the day bends ever more westward ; and no Korff Berline comes to sight. It is four hours beyond the time, and still no Berline. In all Village-streets, Royalist Captains go lounging, looking often Paris-ward ; with face of unconcern, with heart full of black care ; rigorous Quartermasters can hardly keep the private dragoons from *cafés* and dramshops. Dawn on our bewilderment, thou new Berline ; dawn on us, thou Sun-Chariot of a new Berline, with the destinies of France !

It was of his Majesty’s ordering, this military array of Escorts: a thing solacing the Royal imagination with a look of security and rescue ; yet, in reality, creating only alarm, and, where there was otherwise no danger, danger without end. For each Patriot, in these Post-villages, asks naturally : This clatter of cavalry, and marching and lounging of troops, what means it ? To escort a Treasure ? Why escort, when no Patriot will steal from the Nation ; or where is your Treasure ?—There has been such marching and counter-marching : for it is another fatality, that certain of

these Military Escorts came out so early as yesterday ; the Nineteenth not the Twentieth of the month being the day *first* appointed ; which her Majesty, for some necessity or other, saw good to alter. And now consider the suspicious nature of Patriotism ; suspicious, above all, of Bouillé the Aristocrat ; and how the sour doubting humour has had leave to accumulate and exacerbate for four-and-twenty hours !

At Pont-de-Sommevelle, these Forty foreign Hussars of Goguelat and Duke Choiseul are becoming an unspeakable mystery to all men. They lounged long enough, already, at Sainte-Menehould ; lounged and loitered till our National Volunteers there, all risen into hot wrath of doubt, " demanded three hundred fusils of their Townhall," and got them. At which same moment too, as it chanced, our Captain Dandoins was just coming in, from Clermont with *his* troop, at the other end of the Village. A fresh troop, alarming enough ; though happily they are only Dragoons and French ! So that Goguelat with his Hussars had to ride, and even to do it fast ; till here at Pont-de-Sommevelle, where Choiseul lay waiting, he found resting-place. Resting-place as on burning marle. For the rumour of him flies abroad ; and men run to and fro in fright and anger : Chalons sends forth exploratory pickets of National Volunteers towards this hand ; which meet exploratory pickets, coming from Sainte-Menehould, on that. What is it, ye whiskered Hussars, men of foreign guttural speech : in the name of Heaven, what is it that brings you ? A Treasure ?—exploratory pickets shake their heads. The hungry Peasants, however, know too well what Treasure it is ; Military seizure for rents, feudalities ; which no Bailiff could make us pay ! This they know ;—and set to jingling their Parish-bell by way of tocsin ; with rapid effect ! Choiseul and Goguelat, if the whole country is not to take fire, must needs, be there Berline, be there no Berline, saddle and ride.

They mount ; and this parish tocsin happily ceases. They ride slowly Eastward ; towards Sainte-Menehould ;

still hoping the Sun-Chariot of a Berline may overtake them. Ah me, no Berline! And near now is that Sainte-Menehould, which expelled us in the morning, with its "three hundred National fusils;" which looks, belike, not too lovingly on Captain Dandoins and his fresh Dragoons, though only French;—which, in a word, one dare not enter the *second* time, under pain of explosion! With rather heavy heart, our Hussar Party strikes off to the left; through by-ways, through pathless hills and woods, they, avoiding Sainte-Menehould and all places which have seen them heretofore, will make direct for the distant Village of Varennes. It is probable they will have a rough evening-ride.

This first military post, therefore, in the long thunder-chain, has gone off with no effect; or with worse, and your chain threatens to entangle itself!—The Great Road, however, is got hushed again into a kind of quietude, though one of the wakefullest. Indolent Dragoons cannot, by any Quartermaster, be kept altogether from the dramshop; where Patriots drink, and will even treat, eager enough for news. Captains, in a state near distraction, beat the dusty highway, with a face of indifference; and no Sun-Chariot appears. Why lingers it? Incredible, that with eleven horses, and such yellow Couriers and furtherances, its rate should be under the weightiest dray-rate, some three miles an hour! Alas, one knows not whether it ever even got out of Paris;—and yet also one knows not whether, this very moment, it is not at the Village-end! One's heart flutters on the verge of unutterabilities.

#### (iv) OLD-DRAGOON DROUET

In this manner, however, has the Day bent downwards. Wearied mortals are creeping home from their field-labour; the village-artisan eats with relish his supper of herbs, or has strolled forth to the village-street for a sweet mouthful of air and human news. Still summer-eventide everywhere! The great Sun hangs flaming

on the utmost Northwest ; for it is his longest day this year. The hill-tops rejoicing will ere long be at their ruddiest, and blush Good-night. The thrush, in green dells, on long-shadowed leafy spray, pours gushing his glad serenade, to the babble of brooks grown audibler ; silence is stealing over the Earth. Your dusty Mill of Valmy, as all other mills and drudgeries, may furl its canvas, and cease swashing and circling. The swenkt grinders in this Treadmill of an Earth have ground out another Day ; and lounge there, as we say, in village-groups ; movable, or ranked on social stone-seats ; their children, mischievous imps, sporting about their feet. Unnotable hum of sweet human gossip rises from this Village of Sainte-Menehould, as from all other villages. Gossip mostly sweet, unnotable ; for the very Dragoons are French and gallant ; nor as yet has the Paris-and-Verdun Diligence, with its leathern bag, rumbled in, to terrify the minds of men.

One figure nevertheless we do note at the last door of the Village : that figure in loose-flowing nightgown, of Jean Baptiste Drouet, Master of the Post here. An acrid choleric man, rather dangerous-looking ; still in the prime of life, though he has served, in his time, as a Condé Dragoon. This day, from an early hour Drouet got his choler stirred, and has been kept fretting. Hussar Goguelat in the morning saw good, by way of thrift, to bargain with his own Innkeeper, not with Drouet regular *Maitre de Post*, about some gig-horse for the sending back of his gig ; which thing Drouet perceiving came over in red ire, menacing the Innkeeper, and would not be appeased. Wholly an unsatisfactory day. For Drouet is an acrid Patriot too, was at the Paris Feast of Pikes : and what do these Bouillé soldiers mean ? Hussars,—with their gig, and a vengeance to it !—have hardly been thrust out, when Dandoins and his fresh Dragoons arrive from Clermont, and stroll. For what purpose ? Choleric Drouet steps out and steps in, with long-flowing nightgown ; looking abroad, with that sharpness of faculty which stirred choler gives to man.

On the other hand, mark Captain Dandoins on the street of that same Village ; sauntering with a face of indifference, a heart eaten of black care ! For no Korff Berline makes its appearance. The great Sun flames broader towards setting : one's heart flutters on the verge of dread unutterabilities.

By Heaven ! here is the yellow Bodyguard Courier ; spurring fast, in the ruddy evening light ! Steady, O Dandoins, stand with inscrutable indifferent face ; though the yellow blockhead spurs past the Post-house ; inquires to find it ; and stirs the Village, all delighted with his fine livery.—Lumbering along with its mountains of bandboxes, and Chaise behind, the Korff Berline rolls in ; huge Acapulco-ship with its Cockboat, having got thus far. The eyes of the Villagers look enlightened, as such eyes do when a coach-transit, which is an event, occurs for them. Strolling Dragoons respectfully, so fine are the yellow liveries, bring hand to helmet ; and a Lady in gypsy-hat responds with a grace peculiar to her. Dandoins stands with folded arms, and what look of indifference and disdainful garrison-air a man can, while the heart is like leaping out of him. Curled disdainful moustachio ; careless glance,—which however surveys the Village-groups, and does not like them. With his eye he bespeaks the yellow Courier, Be quick, be quick ! Thick-headed Yellow cannot understand the eye ; comes up mumbling, to ask in words : seen of the village !

Nor is Post-master Drouet unobservant, all this while : but steps out and steps in, with his long-flowing night-gown, in the level sunlight ; prying into several things. When a man's faculties, at the right time, are sharpened by choler, it may lead to much. That Lady in slouched gypsy-hat, though sitting back in the Carriage, does she not resemble some one we have seen, some time ;—at the Feast of Pikes, or elsewhere ? And this *Grosse-Tête* in round hat and peruke, which, looking rearward, pokes itself out from time to time, methinks there are features in it——? Quick, Sieur Guillaume, Clerk of the *Directoire*, bring me a new Assignat ! Drouet scans the

new Assignat ; compares the Paper-money Picture with the Gross Head in round hat there : by Day and Night ! you might say the one was an attempted Engraving of the other. And this march of Troops ; this sauntering and whispering,—I see it !

Drouet Post-master of this Village, hot Patriot, Old-Dragoon of Condé, consider, therefore, what thou wilt do. And fast, for behold the new Berline, expeditiously yoked, cracks whipcord, and rolls away !—Drouet dare not, on the spur of the instant, clutch the bridles in his own two hands ; Dandoins, with broadsword, might hew you off. Our poor Nationals, not one of them here, have three hundred fusils, but then no powder ; besides one is not sure, only morally-certain. Drouet, as an adroit Old-Dragoon of Condé, does what is advisablest ; privily bespeaks Clerk Guillaume, Old-Dragoon of Condé he too ; privily, while Clerk Guillaume is saddling two of the fleetest horses, slips over to the Townhall to whisper a word ; then mounts with Clerk Guillaume ; and the two bound eastward in pursuit, to *see* what can be done.

They bound eastward, in sharp trot : their moral-certainty permeating the Village, from the Townhall outwards, in busy whispers. Alas ! Captain Dandoins orders his Dragoons to mount ; but they, complaining of long fast, demand bread-and-cheese first,—before which brief repast can be eaten, the whole Village is permeated ; not whispering now, but blustering and shrieking ! National Volunteers, in hurried muster, shriek for gunpowder ; Dragoons halt between Patriotism and Rule of the Service, between bread-and-cheese and fixed bayonets : Dandoins hands secretly his Pocket-book, with its secret despatches, to the rigorous Quartermaster : the very Ostlers have stable-forks and flails. The rigorous Quartermaster, half-saddled, cuts out his way with the sword's edge, amid levelled bayonets, amid Patriot vociferations, adjurations, flail-strokes ; and rides frantic ;—few or even none following him ; the rest, so sweetly constrained, consenting to stay there.

And thus the new Berline rolls ; and Drouet and

Guillaume gallop after it, and Dandoins' Troopers or Trooper gallops after them ; and Sainte-Menehould, with some leagues of the King's Highway, is in explosion ;—and your Military thunder-chain has gone off in a self-destructive manner ; one may fear, with the frightfullest issues.

(v) THE NIGHT OF SPURS

THIS comes of mysterious Escorts, and a new Berline with eleven horses : “ he that has a secret should not only hide it, but hide that he has it to hide.” Your first Military Escort has exploded self-destructive ; and all Military Escorts, and a suspicious Country will now be up, explosive ; comparable *not* to victorious thunder. Comparable, say rather, to the first stirring of an Alpine Avalanche ; which, once stir it, as here at Sainte-Menehould, will spread,—all round, and on and on, as far as Stenai ; thundering with wild ruin, till Patriot Villagers, Peasantry, Military Escorts, new Berline and Royalty are down,—jumbling in the Abyss !

The thick shades of Night are falling. Postilions crack and whip : the Royal Berline is through Clermont, where Colonel Comte de Damas got a word whispered to it ; is safe through, towards Varennes ; rushing at the rate of double drink-money : an Unknown, “ *Inconnu* on horseback,” shrieks earnestly some hoarse whisper, not audible, into the rushing Carriage-window, and vanishes, left in the night. August Travellers palpitate ; nevertheless overwearied Nature sinks every one of them into a kind of sleep. Alas, and Drouet and Clerk Guillaume spur ; taking side-roads, for shortness, for safety ; scattering abroad that moral-certainty of theirs ; which flies, a bird of the air carrying it !

And your rigorous Quartermaster spurs ; awakening hoarse trumpet-tone,—as here at Clermont, calling out Dragoons gone to bed. Brave Colonel de Damas has them mounted, in part, these Clermont men ; young Cornet Remy dashes off with a few. But the Patriot Magistracy is out here at Clermont too ; National Guards

shrieking for ball-cartridges; and the Village "illuminates itself;"—deft Patriots springing out of bed; alertly, in shirt or shift, striking a light; sticking up each his farthing candle, or penurious oil-cruise, till all glitters and glimmers; so deft are they! A *camisado*, or shirt-tumult, everywhere: storm-bell set a-ringing; village-drum beating furious *générale*, as here at Clermont, under illumination; distracted Patriots pleading and menacing! Brave young Colonel de Damas, in that uproar of distracted Patriotism, speaks some fire-sentences to what Troopers he has: "Comrades insulted at Sainte-Menehould: King and Country calling on the brave;" then gives the fire-word, *Draw swords*. Whereupon, alas, the Troopers only *smite* their sword-handles, driving them further home! "To me, whoever is for the King!" cries Damas in despair; and gallops, he with some poor loyal Two, of the Subaltern sort, into the bosom of the Night.

Night unexampled in the Clermontais; shortest of the year, remarkablest of the century: Night deserving to be named of Spurs! Cornet Remy, and those Few he dashed off with, has missed his road; is galloping for hours towards Verdun; then, for hours, across hedged country, through roused hamlets, towards Varennes. Unlucky Cornet Remy; unluckier Colonel Damas, with whom there ride desperate only some loyal Two! More ride not of that Clermont Escort: of other Escorts, in other Villages, not even Two may ride; but only all curvet and prance,—impeded by storm-bell and your Village illuminating itself.

And Drouet rides and Clerk Guillaume; and the Country runs.—Goguelat and Duke Choiseul are plunging through morasses, over cliffs, over stock and stone, in the shaggy woods of the Clermontais; by tracks; or trackless, with guides; Hussars tumbling into pitfalls, and lying "swooned three quarters of an hour," the rest refusing to march without them. What an evening-ride from Pont-de-Sommeville; what a thirty hours, since Choiseul quitted Paris, with Queen's-valet Leonard in the chaise by him! Black Care sits behind the rider.

Thus go they plunging ; rustle the owlet from his branchy nest ; champ the sweet-scented forest-herb, queen-of-the-meadows *spilling* her spikenard ; and frighten the ear of Night. But hark ! towards twelve o'clock, as one guesses, for the very stars are gone out : sound of the tocsin from Varennes ? Checking bridle, the Hussar Officer listens : " Some fire undoubtedly !" —yet rides on, with double breathlessness, to verify.

Yes, gallant friends that do your utmost, it is a certain sort of fire : difficult to quench.—The Korff Berline, fairly ahead of all this riding Avalanche, reached the little paltry Village of Varennes about eleven o'clock ; hopeful, in spite of that hoarse-whispering Unknown. Do not all Towns now lie behind us ; Verdun avoided, on our right ? Within wind of Bouillé himself, in a manner ; and the darkest of midsummer nights favouring us ! And so we halt on the hill-top at the South end of the Village ; expecting our relay ; which young Bouillé, Bouillé's own son, with his Escort of Hussars, was to have ready ; for in this Village is no Post. Distracting to think of : neither horse nor Hussar is here ! Ah, and stout horses, a proper relay belonging to Duke Choiseul, do stand at hay, but in the Upper Village over the Bridge ; and we know not of them. Hussars likewise do wait, but drinking in the taverns. For indeed it is six hours beyond the time ; young Bouillé, silly stripling, thinking the matter over for this night, has retired to bed. And so our yellow Couriers, inexperienced, must rove, groping, bungling, through a Village mostly asleep : Postilions will not, for any money, go on with the tired horses ; not at least without refreshment ; not they, let the Valet in round hat argue as he likes.

Miserable ! " For five-and-thirty minutes " by the King's watch, the Berline is at a dead stand : Round-hat arguing with Churnboots ; tired horses slobbering their meal-and-water ; yellow Couriers groping, bungling ;—young Bouillé asleep, all the while, in the Upper Village, and Choiseul's fine team standing there at hay. No help for it ; not with a King's ransom ; the horses

deliberately slobber, Round-hat argues, Bouillé sleeps. And mark now, in the thick night, do not two Horsemen, with jaded trot, come clank-clanking ; and start with half-pause, if one noticed them, at sight of this dim mass of a Berline, and its dull slobbering and arguing ; then prick off faster, into the Village ? It is Drouet, he and Clerk Guillaume ! Still ahead, they two, of the whole, riding hurlyburly ; unshot, though some brag of having chased them. Perilous is Drouet's errand also ; but he is an Old-Dragoon, with his wits shaken thoroughly awake.

The Village of Varennes lies dark and slumberous ; a most unlevel Village, of inverse saddle-shape, as men write. It sleeps ; the rushing of the River Aire singing lullaby to it. Nevertheless from the Golden Arm, *Bras d'Or* Tavern, across that sloping Marketplace, there still comes shine of social light ; comes voice of rude drovers, or the like, who have not yet taken the stirrup-cup ; Boniface Le Blanc, in white apron, serving them : cheerful to behold. To this *Bras d'Or*, Drouet enters, alacrity looking through his eyes ; he nudges Boniface, in all privacy, *Camarade, es-tu bon Patriote*, Art thou a good Patriot ?"—" *Si je suis !*" answers Boniface.—" In that case," eagerly whispers Drouet—what whisper is needful, heard of Boniface alone.

And now see Boniface Le Blanc bustling as he never did for the jolliest toper. See Drouet and Guillaume, dexterous Old-Dragoons, instantly down blocking the Bridge, with a " furniture-wagon they find there," with whatever wagons, tumbrils, barrels, barrows their hands can lay hold of ;—till no carriage can pass. Then swiftly, the Bridge once blocked, see them take station hard by, under Varennes Archway : joined by Le Blanc, Le Blanc's Brother, and one or two alert Patriots he has roused. Some half-dozen in all, with National muskets, they stand close, waiting under the Archway, till that same Korff Berline rumble up.

It rumbles up : *Alte là !* lanterns flash out from under coatskirts, bridles chuck in strong fists, two National muskets level themselves fore and aft through the two Coach-doors : " *Mesdames, your Passports ?*"—Alas,

alas ! Sieur Sausse, Procureur of the Township, Tallow-chandler also and Grocer, is there, with official grocer-politeness ; Drouet with fierce logic and ready wit :—The respected Travelling Party, be it Baroness de Korff's, or persons of still higher consequence, will perhaps please to rest itself in M. Sausse's till the dawn strike up !

O Louis ; O hapless Marie-Antoinette, fated to pass thy life with such men ! Phlegmatic Louis, art thou but lazy semi-animate phlegm then, to the centre of thee ? King, Captain-General, Sovereign Frank ! if thy heart ever formed, since it began beating under the name of heart, any resolution at all, be it now then, or never in this world :—“ Violent nocturnal individuals, and if it were persons of high consequence ? And if it were the King himself ? Has the King not the power, which all beggars have, of travelling unmolested on his own Highway ? Yes : it is the King ; and tremble ye to know it ! The King has said, in this one small matter ; and in France, or under God's Throne, is no power that shall gainsay. Not the King shall ye stop here under this your miserable Archway ; but his dead body only, and answer it to Heaven and Earth. To me, Bodyguards ; Postilions, *en avant !*”—One fancies in that case the pale paralysis of these two Le Blanc musketeers ; the drooping of Drouet's underjaw ; and how Procureur Sausse had melted like tallow in furnace-heat : Louis faring on ; in some few steps awakening Young Bouillé, awakening relays and Hussars : triumphant entry, with cavalcading high-brandishing Escort, and Escorts, into Montmedi ; and the whole course of French History different !

Alas, it was not *in* the poor phlegmatic man. Had it been in him, French History had never come under this Varennes Archway to decide itself.—He steps out ; all step out. Procureur Sausse gives his grocer-arms to the Queen and Sister Elizabeth, Majesty taking the two children by the hand. And thus they walk, coolly back, over the Marketplace, to Procureur Sausse's ; mount into his small upper story ; where straightway his

Majesty "demands refreshments." Demands refreshments, as is written ; gets bread-and-cheese with a bottle of Burgundy ; and remarks, that it is the best Burgundy he ever drank !

Meanwhile, the Varennes Notables, and all men, official and non-official, are hastily drawing on their breeches ; getting their fighting gear. Mortals half-dressed tumble out barrels, lay felled trees ; scouts dart off to all the four winds,—the tocsin begins clanging, "the Village illuminates itself." Very singular : how these little Villages do manage, so adroit are they, when startled in midnight alarm of war. Like little adroit municipal rattle-snakes, suddenly awakened : for their storm-bell rattles and rings ; their eyes glisten luminous (with tallow-light), as in rattle-snake ire ; and the Village will *sting*. Old-Dragoon Drouet is our engineer and generalissimo ; valiant as a Ruy Diaz :—Now or never, ye Patriots, for the soldiery is coming ; massacre by Austrians, by Aristocrats, wars more than civil, it all depends on you and the hour !—National Guards rank themselves, half-buttoned : mortals, we say, still only in breeches, in under-petticoat, tumble out barrels and lumber, lay felled trees for barricades : the Village will *sting*. Rabid Democracy, it would seem, is *not* confined to Paris, then ? Ah no, whatsoever Courtiers might talk ; too clearly no. This of dying for one's King is grown into a dying for one's self, *against* the King, if need be.

And so our riding and running Avalanche and Hurlyburly has *reached* the Abyss, Korff Berline foremost ; and may pour itself thither, and jumble : endless ! For the next six hours, need we ask if there was a clattering far and wide ? Clattering and tocsining and hot tumult, over all the Clermontais, spreading through the Three-Bishopricks : Dragoon and Hussar Troops galloping on roads and no-roads ; National Guards arming and starting in the dead of night ; tocsin after tocsin transmitting the alarm. In some forty minutes, Goguelat and Choiseul, with their wearied Hussars,

reach Varennes. Ah, it is no fire, then ; or a fire difficult to quench ! They leap the tree-barricades, in spite of National sergeant ; they enter the village, Choiseul instructing his Troopers how the matter really is ; who respond interjectionally, in their guttural dialect. "*Der König ; die Königin !*" and seem stanch. These now, in their stanch humour, will, for one thing, beset Procureur Sausse's house. Most beneficial : had not Drouet stormfully ordered otherwise ; and even bellowed, in his extremity, "*Cannoneers, to your guns !*" —two old honeycombed Field-pieces, empty of all but cobwebs ; the rattle whereof, as the Cannoneers with assured countenance trundled them up, did nevertheless abate the Hussar ardour, and produce a respectfuller ranking further back. Jugs of wine, handed over the ranks,—for the German throat too has sensibility,—will complete the business. When Engineer Goguelat, some hour or so afterwards, steps forth, the response to him is—a hiccuping *Vive la Nation !*

What boots it ? Goguelat, Choiseul, now also Count Damas, and all the Varennes Officiality are with the King ; and the King can give no order, form no opinion ; but sits there, as he has ever done, like clay on potter's wheel ; perhaps the absurdest of all pitiable and pardonable clay-figures that now circle under the Moon. He will go on, next morning, and take the National Guard *with him* ; Sausse permitting ! Hapless Queen : with her two children laid there on the mean bed, old Mother Sausse kneeling to Heaven, with tears and an audible prayer, to bless them ; imperial Marie-Antoinette near kneeling to Son Sausse and Wife Sausse, amid candle-boxes and treacle-barrels,—in vain ! There are Three thousand National Guards got in ; before long they will count Ten thousand : tocsins spreading like fire on dry heath, or far faster.

Young Bouillé, roused by this Varennes tocsin, has taken horse, and—fled towards his Father. Thitherward also rides, in an almost hysterically desperate manner, a certain Sieur Aubriot, Choiseul's Orderly ; swimming dark rivers, our Bridge being blocked ; spurring as if

the Hell-hunt were at his heels. Through the village of Dun, he galloping still on, scatters the alarm ; at Dun, brave Captain Deslons and *his* Escort of a Hundred saddle and ride. Deslons too gets into Varennes ; leaving his Hundred outside, at the tree-barricade ; offers to cut King Louis out, if he will order it : but unfortunately “the work *will* prove hot :” whereupon King Louis has “no orders to give.”

And so the tocsin clangs, and Dragoons gallop ; and can do nothing, having galloped : National Guards stream in like the gathering of ravens : your exploding Thunder-chain, falling Avalanche, or what else we liken it to, does play, with a vengeance,—up now as far as Stenai and Bouillé himself. Brave Bouillé, son of the whirlwind, he saddles Royal-Allemand ; speaks fire-words, kindling heart and eyes ; distributes twenty-five gold-louis a company :—Ride, Royal Allemand, long-famed : no Tuileries Charge and Necker-Orleans Bust-Procession ; a very King made captive, and world all to win !—Such is the Night deserving to be named of Spurs.

## VIII

### PLACE DE LA RÉVOLUTION

(VOL. III, BOOK II, CHAP. VIII)

To this conclusion, then, hast thou come, O hapless Louis ! The Son of Sixty Kings is to die on the Scaffold by form of Law. Under Sixty Kings this same form of Law, form of Society, has been fashioning itself together, these thousand years ; and has become, one way and other, a most strange Machine. Surely, if needful, it is also frightful, this Machine ; dead, blind ; not what it should be ; which, with swift stroke, or by cold slow torture, has wasted the lives and souls of innumerable men. And behold now a King himself, or say rather Knighthood in his person, is to expire here in

cruel tortures ;—like a Phalaris shut in the belly of his own redheated Brazen Bull ! It is ever so ; and thou shouldst know it, O haughty tyrannous man : injustice breeds injustice ; curses and falsehoods do verily return “ always *h-me*,” wide as they may wander. Innocent Louis bears the sins of many generations : he too experiences that man’s tribunal is not in this Earth ; that if he had no Higher one, it were not well with him.

A King dying by such violence appeals impressively to the imagination ; as the like must do, and ought to do. And yet at bottom it is not the King dying, but the man ! Kingship is a coat : the grand loss is of the skin. The man from whom you take his Life, to him can the whole combined world do *more* ? Lally went on his hurdle ; his mouth filled with a gag. Miserablest mortals, doomed for picking pockets, have a whole five-act Tragedy in them, in that dumb pain, as they go to the gallows, unregarded ; they consume the cup of trembling down to the lees. For Kings and for Beggars, for the justly doomed and the unjustly, it is a hard thing to die. Pity them all : thy utmost pity, with all aids and appliances and throne-and-scaffold contrasts, how far short is it of the thing pitied !

A Confessor has come ; Abbé Edgeworth, of Irish extraction, whom the King knew by good report, has come promptly on this solemn mission. Leave the Earth alone, then, thou hapless King ; it with its malice will go its way, thou also canst go thine. A hard scene yet remains : the parting with our loved ones. Kind hearts, environed in the same grim peril with us ; to be left *here* ! Let the Reader look with the eyes of Valet Cléry, through these glass-doors, where also the Municipality watches ; and see the cruellest of scenes :

“ At half-past eight, the door of the ante-room opened : the Queen appeared first, leading her Son by the hand ; then Madaine Royale and Madame Elizabeth : they all flung themselves into the arms of the King. Silence reigned for some minutes : interrupted only by sobs. The Queen made a movement to lead his Majesty

towards the inner room, where M. Edgeworth was waiting unknown to them : 'No,' said the King, 'let us go into the dining-room, it is there only that I can see you.' They entered there ; I shut the door of it, which was of glass. The King sat down, the Queen on his left hand, Madame Elizabeth on his right, Madame Royale almost in front ; the young Prince remained standing between his Father's legs. They all leaned towards him, and often held him embraced. This scene of wo lasted an hour and three quarters ; during which we could hear nothing ; we could see only that always when the King spoke, the sobs of the Princesses redoubled, continued for some minutes ; and that then the King began again to speak."—And so our meetings and our partings do now end ! The sorrows we gave each other ; the poor joys we faithfully shared, and all our loves and our sufferings, and confused toilings under the earthly Sun, are over. Thou good soul, I shall never, never through all ages of Time, see thee any more !—NEVER ! O Reader, knowest thou that hard word ?

For nearly two hours this agony lasts ; then they tear themselves asunder. "Promise that you will see us on the morrow." He promises :—Ah yes, yes ; yet once ; and go now, ye loved ones ; cry to God for yourselves and me !—It was a hard scene, but it is over. He will not see them on the morrow. The Queen, in passing through the ante-room, glanced at the Cerberus Municipals ; and, with woman's vehemence, said through her tears, "*Vous êtes tous des scélérats.*"

King Louis slept sound, till five in the morning, when Cléry, as he had been ordered, awoke him. Cléry dressed his hair : while this went forward, Louis took a ring from his watch, and kept trying it on his finger ; it was his wedding-ring, which he is now to return to the Queen as a mute farewell. At half-past six, he took the Sacrament ; and continued in devotion, and conference with Abbé Edgeworth. He will not see his Family : it were too hard to bear.

At eight, the Municipals enter : the King gives them

his Will, and messages and effects ; which they, at first, brutally refuse to take charge of : he gives them a roll of gold pieces, a hundred and twenty-five louis ; these are to be returned to Malesherbes, who had lent them. At nine, Santerre says the hour is come. The King begs yet to retire for three minutes. At the end of three minutes, Santerre again says the hour is come. "Stamping on the ground with his right-foot, Louis answers : '*Partons, Let us go.*'" —How the rolling of those drums comes in, through the Temple bastions and bulwarks, on the heart of a queenly wife ; soon to be a widow ! He is gone, then, and has not seen us ? A Queen weeps bitterly ; a King's Sister and Children. Over all these Four does Death also hover : all shall perish miserably save one ; she, as Duchesse d'Angoulême, will live,—not happily.

At the Temple Gate were some faint cries, perhaps from voices of pitiful women : "*Grace ! Grace !*" Through the rest of the streets there is silence as of the grave. No man not armed is allowed to be there : the armed, did any even pity, dare not express it, each man overawed by all his neighbours. All windows are down, none seen looking through them. All shops are shut. No wheel-carriage rolls, this morning, in these streets but one only. Eighty-thousand armed men stand ranked, like armed statues of men ; cannons bristle, cannoneers with match burning, but no word or movement : it is as a city enchanted into silence and stone ; one carriage with its escort, slowly rumbling, is the only sound. Louis reads, in his Book of Devotion, the Prayers of the Dying : clatter of this death-march falls sharp on the ear, in the great silence, but the thought would fain struggle heavenward, and forget the Earth.

As the clocks strike ten, behold the Place de la Révolution, once Place de Louis Quinze : the Guillotine, mounted near the old Pedestal where once stood the Statue of that Louis ! Far round, all bristles with cannons and armed men : spectators crowding in the rear ; D'Orleans Egalité there in cabriolet. Swift messengers, *hoquetons*, speed to the Townhall, every

three minutes: near by is the Convention sitting,—vengeful for Lepelletier. Heedless of all, Louis reads his Prayers of the Dying; not till five minutes yet has he finished; then the Carriage opens. What temper he is in? Ten different witnesses will give ten different accounts of it. He is in the collision of all tempers; arrived now at the black Mahlstrom and descent of Death: in sorrow, in indignation, in resignation struggling to be resigned. "Take care of M. Edgeworth," he straitly charges the Lieutenant who is sitting with them: then they two descend.

The drums are beating: "*Taisez-vous, Silence!*" he cries "in a terrible voice, *d'une voix terrible.*" He mounts the scaffold, not without delay; he is in puce coat, breeches of gray, white stockings. He strips off the coat; stands disclosed in a sleeve-waistcoat of white flannel. The Executioners approach to bind him: he spurns, resists; Abbé Edgeworth has to remind him how the Saviour, in whom men trust, submitted to be bound. His hands are tied, his head bare; the fatal moment is come. He advances to the edge of the Scaffold, "his face very red," and says: "Frenchmen, I die innocent: it is from the Scaffold and near appearing before God that I tell you so. I pardon my enemies; I desire that France—" A General on horseback, Santerre or another, prances out, with uplifted hand: "*Tambours!*" The drums drown the voice. "Executioners, do your duty!" The Executioners, desperate lest themselves be murdered (for Santerre and his Armed Ranks will strike, if they do not), seize the hapless Louis: six of them desperate, him singly desperate, struggling there; and bind him to their plank. Abbé Edgeworth, stooping, bespeaks him: "Son of Saint Louis, ascend to Heaven." The Axe clanks down; a King's Life is shorn away. It is Monday the 21st of January 1793. He was aged Thirty-eight years four months and twenty-eight days.

Executioner Samson shows the Head: fierce shout of *Vive la République* rises, and swells; caps raised on

bayonets, hats waving : students of the College of Four Nations take it up, on the far Quais ; fling it over Paris. D'Orleans drives off in his cabriolet : the Townhall Councillors rub their hands, saying, "It is done, It is done." There is dipping of handkerchiefs, of pike-points in the blood. Headsman Samson, though he afterwards denied it, sells locks of the hair : fractions of the puce coat are long after worn in rings.—And so, in some half-hour it is done ; and the multitude has all departed. Pastry-cooks, coffee-sellers, milkmen sing out their trivial quotidian cries : the world wags on, as if this were a common day. In the coffeehouses that evening, says Prudhomme, Patriot shook hands with Patriot in a more cordial manner than usual. Not till some days after, according to Mercier, did public men see what a grave thing it was. \* \* \*

At home this Killing of a King has divided all friends ; and abroad it has united all enemies. Fraternity of Peoples, Revolutionary Propagandism ; Atheism, Regicide ; total destruction of social order in this world ! All Kings, and lovers of Kings, and haters of Anarchy, rank in coalition ; as in a war for life. England signifies to Citizen Chauvelin, the Ambassador or rather Ambassador's-Cloak, that he must quit the country in eight days. Ambassador's-Cloak and Ambassador, Chauvelin and Talleyrand, depart accordingly. Talleyrand, implicated in that Iron Press of the Tuilleries, thinks it safest to make for America.

England has cast out the Embassy : England declares war,—being shocked principally, it would seem, at the condition of the River Scheldt. Spain declares war ; being shocked principally at some other thing ; which doubtless the Manifesto indicates. Nay, we find that it was not England that declared war first, or Spain first ; but that France herself declared war first on both of them ;—a point of immense Parliamentary and Journalistic interest in those days, but which has become of no interest whatever in these. They all declare war. The sword is drawn, the scabbard thrown away. It is even as Danton said, in one of his all-too

gigantic figures : “ The coalised Kings threaten us ; we hurl at their feet, as gage of battle, the Head of a King.”

## IX

## CHARLOTTE CORDAY

(VOL. III, BOOK IV, CHAP. I)

AMID which dim ferment of Caen and the World, History specially notices one thing : in the lobby of the Mansion *de l'Intendance*, where busy Deputies are coming and going, a young Lady with an aged valet, taking grave graceful leave of Deputy Barbaroux. She is of stately Norman figure ; in her twenty-fifth year ; of beautiful still countenance : her name is Charlotte Corday, heretofore styled D'Armans, while Nobility still was. Barbaroux has given her a Note to Deputy Duperret,—him who once drew his sword in the effervescence. Apparently she will to Paris on some errand ? “ She was a Republican before the Revolution, and never wanted energy.” A completeness, a decision is in this fair female Figure : “ by energy she means the spirit that will prompt one to sacrifice himself for his country.” What if she, this fair young Charlotte, had emerged from her secluded stillness, suddenly like a Star ; cruel-lovely, with half-angelic, half-dæmonic splendour ; to glean for a moment, and in a moment be extinguished : to be held in memory, so bright complete was she, through long centuries !—Quitting Cimmerian Coalitions without, and the dim-simmering Twenty-five millions within, History will look fixedly at this one fair Apparition of a Charlotte Corday ; will note whither Charlotte moves, how the little Life burns forth so radiant, then vanishes swallowed of the Night.

With Barbaroux's Note of Introduction, and slight stock of luggage, we see Charlotte on Tuesday the ninth of July seated in the Caen Diligence, with a place

for Paris. None takes farewell of her, wishes her Good-journey: her Father will find a line left, signifying that she is gone to England, that he must pardon her, and forget her. The drowsy Diligence lumbers along; amid drowsy talk of Politics, and praise of the Mountain; in which she mingles not: all night, all day, and again all night. On Thursday, not long before noon, we are at the bridge of Neuilly; here is Paris with her thousand black domes, the goal and purpose of thy journey! Arrived at the Inn de la Providence in the Rue des Vieux Augustins, Charlotte demands a room; hastens to bed; sleeps all afternoon and night, till the morrow morning.

On the morrow morning, she delivers her Note to Duperret. It relates to certain Family Papers which are in the Minister of the Interior's hand; which a Nun at Caen, an old Convent-friend of Charlotte's, has need of; which Duperret shall assist her in getting: this then was Charlotte's errand to Paris? She has finished this, in the course of Friday;—yet says nothing of returning. She has seen and silently investigated several things. The Convention, in bodily reality, she has seen; what the Mountain is like. The living physiognomy of Marat she could not see; he is sick at present, and confined to home.

About eight on the Saturday morning, she purchases a large sheath-knife in the Palais Royal; then straightway, in the Place des Victoires, takes a hackney-coach: “To the Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine, No. 44.” It is the residence of the Citoyen Marat!—The Citoyen Marat is ill, and cannot be seen; which seems to disappoint her much. Her business is with Marat, then? Hapless beautiful Charlotte; hapless squalid Marat! From Caen in the utmost West, from Neuchâtel in the utmost East, they two are drawing nigh each other; they two have, very strangely, business together.—Charlotte, returning to her Inn, despatches a short Note to Marat; signifying that she is from Caen, the seat of rebellion; that she desires earnestly to see him, and “will put it in his power to do France a great service.”

No answer. Charlotte writes another Note, still more pressing ; sets out with it by coach, about seven in the evening, herself. Tired day-labourers have again finished their Week ; huge Paris is circling and simmering, manifold, according to its vague wont : this one fair Figure has decision in it ; drives straight,—towards a purpose.

It is yellow July evening, we say, the thirteenth of the month : eve of the Bastille day,—when “M. Marat,” four years ago, in the crowd of the Pont Neuf, shrewdly required of that Besenval Hussar-party, which had such friendly dispositions, “to dismount, and give up their arms, then ;” and became notable among Patriot men. Four years : what a road he has travelled ;—and sits now, about half-past seven of the clock, stewing in slipper-bath ; sore afflicted ; ill of Revolution Fever,—of what other malady this History had rather not name. Excessively sick and worn, poor man : with precisely eleven-pence-halfpenny of ready money, in paper ; with slipper-bath ; strong three-footed stool for writing on, the while ; and a squalid—Washerwoman, one may call her : that is his civic establishment in Medical-School Street ; thither and not elsewhither has his road led him. Not to the reign of Brotherhood and Perfect Felicity ; yet surely on the way towards that ?—Hark, a rap again ! A musical woman’s voice, refusing to be rejected : it is the Citoyenne who would do France a service. Marat, recognising from within, cries, Admit her. Charlotte Corday is admitted.

Citoyen Marat, I am from Caen the seat of rebellion, and wished to speak with you.—Be seated, *mon enfant*. Now what are the Traitors doing at Caen ? What Deputies are at Caen ?—Charlotte names some Deputies. “Their heads shall fall within a fortnight,” croaks the eager People’s-friend, clutching his tablets to write : *Barbaroux*, *Pétion*, writes he with bare shrunk arm, turning aside in the bath : *Pétion*, and *Louvet*, and—Charlotte has drawn her knife from the sheath ; plunges it, with one sure stroke, into the writer’s heart. “*À moi, chère amie*, Help, dear !” no more could the

Death-choked say or shriek. The helpful Washerwoman running in, there is no Friend of the People, or Friend of the Washerwoman left ; but his life with a groan gushes out, indignant, to the shades below.

And so Marat People's-friend is ended ; the lone Stylites has got hurled down suddenly from his Pillar—*whitherward* He that made him knows. Patriot Paris may sound triple and tenfold, in dole and wail ; re-echoed by Patriot France ; and the Convention, “Chabot pale with terror, declaring that they are to be all assassinated,” may decree him Pantheon Honours, Public Funeral, Mirabeau’s dust making way for him ; and Jacobin Societies, in lamentable oratory, summing up his character, parallel him to One, whom they think it honour to call “the good Sansculotte,”—whom we name not here ; also a Chapel may be made, for the urn that holds his Heart, in the Place du Carrousel ; and new-born children be named Marat ; and Lago-di-Como Hawkers bake mountains of stucco into unbeautiful Busts ; and David paint his Picture, or Death-Scene ; and such other Apotheosis take place as the human genius, in these circumstances, can devise : but Marat returns no more to the light of this Sun. One sole circumstance we have read with clear sympathy, in the old *Moniteur* Newspaper : how Marat’s Brother comes from Neuchâtel to ask of the Convention, “that the deceased Jean-Paul Marat’s musket be given him.” For Marat too had a brother, and natural affections ; and was wrapt once in swaddling-clothes, and slept safe in a cradle like the rest of us. Ye children of men !—A sister of his, they say, lives still to this day in Paris.

As for Charlotte Corday, her work is accomplished ; the recompense of it is near and sure. The *chère amie*, and neighbours of the house, flying at her, she “overturns some movables,” entrenches herself till the gendarmes arrive ; then quietly surrenders ; goes quietly to the Abbaye Prison : she alone quiet, all Paris sounding, in wonder, in rage or admiration, round her. Duperret is put in arrest, on account of her ; his Papers sealed,—which may lead to consequences. Fauchet, in

like manner; though Fauchet had not so much as heard of her. Charlotte, confronted with these two Deputies, praises the grave firmness of Duperret, censures the dejection of Fauchet.

On Wednesday morning, the thronged Palais de Justice and Revolutionary Tribunal can see her face; beautiful and calm: she dates it "fourth day of the Preparation of Peace." A strange murmur ran through the Hall, at sight of her; you could not say of what character. Tinville has his indictments and tape-papers: the cutler of the Palais Royal will testify that he sold her the sheath-knife; "All these details are needless," interrupted Charlotte; "it is I that killed Marat." By whose instigation?—"By no one's." What tempted you, then? His crimes. "I killed one man," added she, raising her voice extremely (*extrêmement*), as they went on with their questions, "I killed one man to save a hundred thousand; a villain to save innocents; a savage wild-beast to give repose to my country. I was a Republican before the Revolution; I never wanted energy." There is therefore nothing to be said. The public gazes astonished: the hasty limners sketch her features, Charlotte not disapproving: the men of law proceed with their formalities. The doom is Death as a murdereress. To her Advocate she gives thanks; in gentle phrase, in high-flown classical spirit. To the Priest they send her she gives thanks; but needs not any shriving, any ghostly or other aid from him.

On this same evening therefore, about half-past seven o'clock, from the gate of the Conciergerie, to a City all on tiptoe, the fatal Cart issues; seated on it a fair young creature, sheeted in red smock of Murderess; so beautiful, serene, so full of life; journeying towards death,—alone amid the World. Many take off their hats, saluting reverently; for what heart but must be touched? Others growl and howl. Adam Lux, of Mentz, declares that she is greater than Brutus; that it were beautiful to die with her: the head of this young man seems turned. At the Place de la Révolution, the

countenance of Charlotte wears the same still smile. The executioners proceed to bind her feet; she resists, thinking it meant as an insult; on a word of explanation, she submits with cheerful apology. As the last act, all being now ready, they take the neckerchief from her neck; a blush of maidenly shame overspreads that fair face and neck; the cheeks were still tinged with it when the executioner lifted the severed head, to show it to the people. "It is most true," says Forster, "that he struck the cheek insultingly; for I saw it with my eyes: the Police imprisoned him for it."

In this manner have the Beautifullest and the Squalidest come in collision, and extinguished one another. Jean-Paul Marat and Marie-Anne Charlotte Corday both, suddenly, are no more. "Day of the Preparation of Peace?" Alas, how were peace possible or preparable, while, for example, the hearts of lovely Maidens, in their convent-stillness, are dreaming not of Love-paradises, and the light of Life; but of Codrus'-sacrifices, and Death well-earned? That Twenty-five million hearts have got to such temper, this is the Anarchy; the soul of it lies in this: whereof not peace can be the embodiment! The death of Marat, whetting old animosities tenfold, will be worse than any life. O ye hapless Two, mutually extinctive, the Beautiful and the Squalid, sleep ye well,—in the Mother's bosom that bore you both!

This is the History of Charlotte Corday; most definite, most complete; angelic-dæmonic: like a Star!

## X

## DANTON

(VOL. III, BOOK VI, CHAPTER II)

UNHAPPY Danton, thou still unhappier light Camille, once light *Procureur de la Lanterne*, ye also have arrived, then, at the Bourne of Creation, where, like Ulysses

Polytlos at the limit and utmost Gades of his voyage, gazing down into that dim Waste beyond Creation, a man does see *the Shade of his Mother*, pale, ineffectual ;—and days when his Mother nursed and wrapped him are all-too sternly contrasted with this day ! Danton, Camille, Hérault, Westermann, and the others, very strangely massed up with Bazires, Swindler Chabots, Fabre d'Eglantines, Banker Freys, a most motley Batch, “*Fournée*” as such things will be called, stand ranked at the Bar of Tinville. It is the 2d of April 1794. Danton has had but three days to lie in Prison ; for the time presses.

What is your name ? place of abode ? and the like, Fouquier asks ; according to formality. “ My name is Danton,” answers he ; “ a name tolerably known in the Revolution : my abode will soon be Annihilation (*dans le Niant*) ; but I shall live in the Pantheon of History.” A man will endeavour to say something forcible, be it by nature or not ! Hérault mentions epigrammatically that he “ sat in this Hall, and was detested of Parlementeers.” Camille makes answer, “ My age is that of the *bon Sansculotte Jésus* ; an age fatal to Revolutionists.” O Camille, Camille ! And yet in that Divine Transaction, let us say, there did lie, among other things, the fatallest Reproof ever uttered here below to Worldly Righthonourableness ; “ the highest fact,” so devout Novalis calls it, “ in the Rights of Man.” Camille’s real age, it would seem, is thirty-four. Danton is one year older.

Some five months ago, the Trial of the Twenty-two Girondins was the greatest that Fouquier had then done. But here is a still greater to do ; a thing which tasks the whole faculty of Fouquier ; which makes the very heart of him waver. For it is the voice of Danton that reverberates now from these domes ; in passionate words, piercing with their wild sincerity, winged with wrath. Your best Witnesses he shivers into ruin at one stroke. He demands that the Committee-men themselves come as Witnesses, as Accusers ; he “ will cover them with ignominy.” He raises his huge stature,

he shakes his huge black head, fire flashes from the eyes of him,—piercing to all Republican hearts: so that the very Galleries, though we filled them by ticket, murmur sympathy; and are like to burst down, and raise the People, and deliver him! He complains loudly that he is classed with Chabots, with swindling Stockjobbers; that his Indictment is a list of platitudes and horrors. “Danton hidden on the 10th of August?” reverberates he, with the roar of a lion in the toils: “where are the men that had to press Danton to show himself, that day? Where are these high-gifted souls of whom he borrowed energy? Let them appear, these Accusers of mine: I have all the clearness of my self-possession when I demand them. I will unmask the three shallow scoundrels,” *les trois plats coquins*, Saint-Just, Couthon, Lebas, “who fawn on Robespierre, and lead him towards his destruction. Let them produce themselves here; I will plunge them into Nothingness, out of which they ought never to have risen.” The agitated President agitates his bell; enjoins calmness, in a vehement manner; “What is it to thee how I defend myself?” cries the other: “the right of *dooming* me is thine always. The voice of a man speaking for his honour and his life may well drown the jingling of thy bell!” Thus Danton, higher and higher; till the lion-voice of him “dies away in his throat;” speech will not utter what is in that man. The Galleries murmur ominously; the first day’s Session is over.

O Tinville, President Herman, what will ye do? They have two days more of it, by strictest Revolutionary Law. The Galleries already murmur. If this Danton were to burst your meshwork!—Very curious indeed to consider. It turns on a hair: and what a Hoitytoity were *there*, Justice and Culprit changing places; and the whole History of France running changed! For in France there is this Danton only that could still try to govern France. He only, the wild amorphous Titan;—and perhaps that other olive-complexioned individual, the Artillery-Officer at Toulon, whom we left pushing his fortune in the South?

On the evening of the second day, matters looking not better but worse and worse, Fouquier and Herman, distraction in their aspect, rush over to *Salut Public*. What is to be done? *Salut Public* rapidly concocts a new Decree; whereby if men "insult Justice," they may be "thrown out of the Debates." For indeed, withal, is there not "a Plot in the Luxembourg Prison?" *Ci-devant* General Dillon, and others of the Suspect, plotting with Camille's Wife to distribute *assignats*; to force the Prisons, overset the Republic? Citizen Laflotte, himself Suspect but desiring enfranchisement, has reported said Plot for us:—a report that may bear fruit! Enough, on the morrow morning, an obedient Convention passes this Decree. *Salut* rushes off with it to the aid of Tinville, reduced now almost to extremities. And so, *Hors de Débats*, Out of the Debates, ye insolents! Policemen, do your duty! In such manner, with a dead-lift effort, *Salut*, Tinville, Herman, Leroi *Dix-Août*, and all stanch jurymen setting heart and shoulder to it, the Jury becomes "sufficiently instructed;" Sentence is passed, is sent by an Official, and torn and trampled on: *Death this day*. It is the 5th of April 1794. Camille's poor Wife may cease hovering about this Prison. Nay, let her kiss her poor children; and prepare to enter it, and to follow!—

Danton carried a high look in the Death-cart. Not so Camille: it is but one week, and all is so topsy-turvied; angel Wife left weeping; love, riches, Revolutionary fame, left all at the Prison-gate; carnivorous Rabble now howling round. Palpable, and yet incredible; like a madman's dream! Camille struggles and writhes; his shoulders shuffle the loose coat off them, which hangs knotted, the hands tied: "Calm, my friend," said Danton; "heed not that vile canaille (*laissez là cette vile canaille*)."<sup>1</sup> At the foot of the Scaffold, Danton was heard to ejaculate: "O my Wife, my well-beloved, I shall never see thee more then!"—but, interrupting himself: "Danton, no weakness!" He said to Hérault-Séchelles stepping forward to embrace him: "Our heads will meet *there*," in the Headsman's

sack. His last words were to Samson the Headsman himself: "Thou wilt show my head to the people; it is worth showing."

So passes, like a gigantic mass, of valour, ostentation, fury, affection and wild revolutionary force and manhood, this Danton, to his unknown home. He was of Arcis-sur-Aube; born of "good farmer-people" there. He had many sins; but one worst sin he had not, that of *Cant*. No hollow Formalist, deceptive and self-deceptive, *ghastly* to the natural sense, was this; but a very Man: with all his dross he was a Man; fiery-real, from the great fire-bosom of Nature herself. He saved France from Brunswick; he walked straight his own wild road, whither it led him. He may live for some generations in the memory of men.

## XI

### END OF THE REIGN OF TERROR

(VOL. III, BOOK VI, CHAP. VII)

OUR fifth-act, of this natural Greek Drama, with its natural unities, can only be painted in gross; somewhat as that antique Painter, driven desperate, did the *foam*. For through this blessed July night, there is clangour, confusion very great, of marching troops; of Sections going this way, Sections going that; of Missionary Representatives reading Proclamations by torchlight; Missionary Legendre, who has raised force somewhere, emptying out the Jacobins, and flinging their key on the Convention table: "I have locked their door; it shall be Virtue that reopens it." Paris, we say, is set against itself, rushing confused, as Ocean-currents do; a huge Mahlstrom, sounding there, under cloud of night. Convention sits permanent on this hand; Municipality most permanent on that. The poor prisoners hear tocsin and rumour; strive to bethink them of the signals apparently of hope. Meek continual Twilight streaming

up, which will be Dawn and a Tomorrow, silvers the Northern hem of Night ; it wends and wends there, that meek brightness, like a silent prophecy, along the great ring-dial of the Heaven. So still, eternal ! and on Earth all is confused shadow and conflict ; dissidence, tumultuous gloom and glare ; and " Destiny as yet sits wavering, and shakes her doubtful urn."

About three in the morning, the dissident Armed Forces have *met*. Henriot's Armed Force stood ranked in the Place de Grève ; and now Barras's, which he has recruited, arrives there ; and they front each other, cannon bristling against cannon. *Citoyens !* cries the voice of Discretion loudly enough, Before coming to bloodshed, to endless civil-war, hear the Convention Decree read : " Robespierre and all rebels Out of Law ! " —Out of Law ? There is terror in the sound. Unarmed *Citoyens* disperse rapidly home. Municipal Cannoneers, in sudden whirl, anxiously unanimous, range themselves on the Convention side, with shouting. At which shout, Henriot descends from his upper room, far gone in drink as some say ; finds his Place de Grève empty ; the cannon's mouth turned *towards* him ; and on the whole, —that it is now the catastrophe !

Stumbling in again, the wretched drunk-sobered Henriot announces : " All is lost ! " " *Misérable*, it is thou that hast lost it ! " cry they ; and fling him, or else he flings himself, out of window : far enough down ; into masonwork and horror of cesspool ; not into death but worse. Augustin Robespierre follows him ; with the like fate. Saint-Just, they say, called on Lebas to kill him ; who would not. Couthon crept under a table ; attempting to kill himself ; not doing it.—On entering that Sanhedrim of Insurrection, we find all as good as extinct ; undone, ready for seizure. Robespierre was sitting on a chair, with pistol-shot blown through not his head but his under-jaw ; the suicidal hand had failed. With prompt zeal, not without trouble, we gather these wrecked Conspirators ; fish up even Henriot and Augustin, bleeding and foul ; pack them all, rudely enough, into carts ; and shall, before sunrise,

have them safe under lock and key. Amid shoutings and embracings.

Robespierre lay in an anteroom of the Convention Hall, while his Prison-escort was getting ready; the mangled jaw bound up rudely with bloody linen: a spectacle to men. He lies stretched on a table, a deal box his pillow; the sheath of the pistol is still clenched convulsively in his hand. Men bully him, insult him: his eyes still indicate intelligence; he speaks no word. "He had on the sky-blue coat he had got made for the Feast of the *Etre Suprême*"—O Reader, can thy hard heart hold out against that? His trousers were nankeen; the stockings had fallen down over the ankles. He spake no word more in this world.

And so, at six in the morning, a victorious Convention adjourns. Report flies over Paris as on golden wings; penetrates the Prisons; irradiates the faces of those that were ready to perish: turnkeys and *meutons*, fallen from their high estate, look mute and blue. It is the 28th day of July, called 10th of Thermidor, year 1794.

Fouquier had but to identify; his Prisoners being already Out of Law. At four in the afternoon, never before were the streets of Paris seen so crowded. From the Palais de Justice to the Place de la Révolution, for *thither* again go the Tumbrils this time, it is one dense stirring mass; all windows crammed; the very roofs and ridge-tiles budding forth human Curiosity, in strange gladness. The Death-tumbrils, with their motley Batch of Outlaws, some Twenty-three or so, from Maximilien to Mayor Fleuriot and Simon the Cordwainer, roll on. All eyes are on Robespierre's Tumbril, where he, his jaw bound in dirty linen, with his half-dead Brother, and half-dead Henriot, lie shattered; their "seventeen hours" of agony about to end. The Gendarmes point their swords at him, to show the people which is he. A woman springs on the Tumbril; clutching the side of it with one hand; waving the other Sibyl-like; and exclaims: "The death of thee gladdens my very heart, *m'enivre de joie*;" Robespierre opened his eyes; "Scélérat, go down to Hell, with the curses of all wives and

mothers!"—At the foot of the scaffold, they stretched him on the ground till his turn came. Lifted aloft, his eyes again opened; caught the bloody axe. Samson wrenched the coat off him; wrenched the dirty linen from his jaw: the jaw fell powerless, there burst from him a cry;—hideous to hear and see. Samson, thou canst not be too quick!

Samson's work done, there bursts forth shout on shout of applause. Shout, which prolongs itself not only over Paris, but over France, but over Europe, and down to this generation. Deservedly, and also undeservedly. O unhappiest Advocate of Arras, wert thou worse than other Advocates? Stricter man, according to his Formula, to his Credo and his Cant, of probities, benevolences, pleasures-of-virtue, and such like, lived not in that age. A man fitted, in some luckier settled age, to have become one of those incorruptible barren Pattern-Figures, and have had marble-tablets and funeral-sermons. His poor landlord, the Cabinet-maker in the Rue Saint-Honoré, loved him; his Brother died for him. May God be merciful to him, and to us!

This is the end of the Reign of Terror; new glorious *Revolution* named *of Thermidor*; of Thermidor 9th, year 2; which being interpreted into old slave-style means 27th of July 1794. Terror is ended; and death in the Place de la Révolution, were the “*Tail of Robespierre*” once executed; which service Fouquier in large Batches is swiftly managing.

## XII

### THE WHIFF OF GRAPESHOT

(VOL. III, BOOK VII, CHAP. VI)

SANSUCLOTTISM is dead; extinguished by new *isms* of that kind, which were its own natural progeny; and is buried, we may say, with such deafening jubilation and disharmony of funeral-knell on their part, that only after

some half-century or so does one begin to learn clearly why it ever was alive.

And yet a meaning lay in it : Sansculottism verily was alive, a New-Birth of TIME ; nay it still lives, and is not dead but changed. The *soul* of it still lives ; still works far and wide, through one bodily shape into another less amorphous, as is the way of cunning Time with his New-Births :—till, in some perfected shape, it embrace the whole circuit of the world ! For the wise man may now everywhere discern that he must found on his manhood, not on the garnitures of his manhood. He who, in these Epochs of our Europe, founds on garnitures, formulas, culottisms of what sort soever, is founding on old cloth and sheepskin, and cannot endure. But as for the body of Sansculottism, that is dead and buried, —and, one hopes, need not reappear, in primary amorphous shape, for another thousand years.

It was the frightfullest thing ever born of Time ? One of the frightfullest. This Convention, now grown Antijacobin, did, with an eye to justify and fortify itself, publish Lists of what the Reign of Terror had perpetrated : Lists of Persons Guillotined. The Lists, cries splenetic Abbé Montgaillard, were not complete. They contain the names of, How many persons thinks the Reader ?—Two-thousand all but a few. There were above Four-thousand, cries Montgaillard : so many were guillotined, fusilladed, noyaded, done to dire death ; of whom Nine-hundred were women. It is a horrible sum of human lives, M. l'Abbé :—some ten times as many shot rightly on a field of battle, and one might have had his Glorious-Victory with *Te-Deum*. It is not far from the two-hundredth part of what perished in the entire Seven-Years' War. By which Seven-Years' War, did not the great Fritz wrench Silesia from the great Theresa ; and a Pompadour, stung by epigrams, satisfy herself that she could not be an Agnes Sorel ? The head of man is a strange vacant sounding-shell, M. l'Abbé ; and studies Cocker to small purpose. \* \* \*

Such things were ; such things are ; and they go on in silence peaceably :—and Sansculottisms follow them.

History, looking back over this France through long times, back to Turgot's time for instance, when dumb Drudgery staggered up to its King's Palace, and in wide expanse of sallow faces, squalor and winged raggedness, presented hieroglyphically its Petition of Grievances ; and for answer got hanged on a "new gallows forty feet high,"—confesses mournfully that there is no period to be met with, in which the general Twenty-five Millions of France suffered *less* than in this period which they name Reign of Terror ! But it was not the Dumb Millions that suffered here ; it was the Speaking Thousands, and Hundreds and Units ; who shrieked and published, and made the world ring with their wail, as they could and should : that is the grand peculiarity. The frightfullest Births of Time are never the loud-speaking ones, for these soon die ; they are the silent ones, which can live from century to century ! Anarchy, hateful as Death, is abhorrent to the whole nature of man ; and so must itself soon die. \* \* \*

The Muscadin Sections greatly rejoice ; Cabarus Balls gyrate : the well-nigh insoluble problem, *Republic without Anarchy*, have we not solved it ?—Law of Fraternity or Death is gone : chimerical *Obtain-who-need* has become practical *Hold-who-have*. To anarchic Republic of the Poorties there has succeeded orderly Republic of the Luxuries ; which will continue as long as it can.

On the Pont au Change, on the Place de Grève, in long sheds, Mercier, in these summer evenings, saw working men at their repast. One's allotment of daily bread has sunk to an ounce and a half. " Plates containing each three grilled herrings, sprinkled with shorn onions, wetted with a little vinegar ; to this add some morsel of boiled prunes, and lentils swimming in a clear sauce : at these frugal tables, the cook's gridiron hissing near by, and the pot simmering on a fire between two stones, I have seen them ranged by the hundred ; consuming, without bread, their scant messes, far too moderate for the keenness of their appetite, and the extent of their stomach." Seine water, rushing plenteous by, will supply the deficiency.

O Man of Toil, thy struggling and thy daring, these six long years of insurrection and tribulation, thou hast profited nothing by it, then? Thou consumest thy herring and water, in the blessed gold-red of evening. O why was the Earth so beautiful, becrimsoned with dawn and twilight, if man's dealings with man were to make it a vale of scarcity, of tears, not even soft tears? Destroying of Bastilles, discomfiting of Brunswicks, fronting of Principalities and Powers, of Earth and Tophet, all that thou hast dared and endured,—it was for a Republic of the Cabarus Saloons? Patience; thou must have patience: the end is not yet. \* \* \*

It remains to be seen how the quellers of Sansculotism were themselves quelled, and sacred right of Insurrection was blown away by gunpowder; wherewith this singular eventful History called *French Revolution* ends.

The Convention, driven such a course by wild wind, wild tide and steerage and non-steerage, these three years, has become weary of its own existence, sees all men weary of it; and wishes heartily to finish. To the last, it has to strive with contradictions: it is now getting fast ready with a Constitution, yet knows no peace. Sieyes, we say, is making the Constitution once more; has as good as made it. Warned by experience, the great Architect alters much, admits much. Distinction of Active and Passive Citizen, that is, Money-qualification for Electors: nay Two Chambers, "Council of Ancients," as well as "Council of Five-hundred;" to that conclusion have we come! In a like spirit, eschewing that fatal self-denying ordinance of your Old Constituents, we enact not only that actual Convention Members are re-eligible, but that Two-thirds of them must be re-elected. The Active Citizen Electors shall for this time have free choice of only One-third of their National Assembly. Such enactment, of Two-thirds to be re-elected, we append to our Constitution; we submit our Constitution to the Townships of France, and say, Accept *both*, or reject *both*. Unsavoury as this appendix

may be, the Townships, by overwhelming majority, accept and ratify. With Directory of Five: with Two good Chambers, double-majority of them nominated by ourselves, one hopes this Constitution may prove final. *March* it will; for the legs of it, the re-elected Two-thirds, are already here, able to march. Sieyes looks at his paper-fabric with just pride.

But now see how the contumacious Sections, Lepelletier foremost, kick against the pricks! Is it not manifest infraction of one's Elective Franchise, Rights of Man, and Sovereignty of the People, this appendix of re-electing *your* Two-thirds? Greedy tyrants who would perpetuate yourselves!—For the truth is, victory over Saint-Antoine, and long right of Insurrection, has spoiled these men. Nay spoiled all men. Consider too how each man was free to hope what he liked; and now there is to be no hope, there is to be fruition, fruition of *this*. \* \* \*

The Convention has some Five-thousand regular troops at hand; Generals in abundance; and a Fifteen-hundred of miscellaneous persecuted Ultra-Jacobins, whom in this crisis it has hastily got together and armed, under the title *Patriots of Eighty-nine*. Strong in Law, it sends its General Menou to disarm Lepelletier.

General Menou marches accordingly, with due summons and demonstration; with no result. General Menou, about eight in the evening, finds that he is standing ranked in the Rue Vivienne, emitting vain summonses; with primed guns pointed out of every window at him; and that he cannot disarm Lepelletier. He has to return, with whole skin, but without success; and be thrown into arrest, as “a traitor.” Whereupon the whole Forty-thousand join this Lepelletier which cannot be vanquished: to what hand shall a quaking Convention now turn? Our poor Convention, after such voyaging, just entering harbour, so to speak, has *struck on the bar*;—and labours there frightfully, with breakers roaring round it, Forty-thousand of them, like to wash it, and its Sieyes Cargo and the whole future of France,

into the deep ! Yet one last time, it struggles, ready to perish.

Some call for Barras to be made Commandant ; he conquered in Thermidor. Some, what is more to the purpose, bethink them of the Citizen Buonaparte, unemployed Artillery-Officer, who took Toulon. A man of head, a man of action : Barras is named Commandant's-Cloak ; this young Artillery-Officer is named Commandant. He was in the Gallery at the moment, and heard it : he withdrew, some half-hour, to consider with himself : after a half-hour of grim compressed considering, to be or not to be, he answers *Yea*.

And now, a man of head being at the centre of it, the whole matter gets vital. Swift, to Camp of Sablons ; to secure the Artillery, there are not twenty men guarding it ! A swift Adjutant, Murat is the name of him, gallops ; gets thither some minutes within time, for Lepelletier was also on march that way : the Cannon are ours. And now beset this post, and beset that ; rapid and firm : at Wicket of the Louvre, in Cul-de-sac Dauphin, in Rue Saint-Honoré, from Pont-Neuf all along the north Quays, southward to Pont *ci-devant* Royal,—rank round the Sanctuary of the Tuilleries, a ring of steel discipline ; let every gunner have his match burning, and all men stand to their arms !

Thus there is Permanent-session through the night ; and thus at sunrise of the morrow, there is seen sacred Insurrection once again : vessel of State labouring on the bar ; and tumultuous sea all round her, beating *générale*, arming and sounding,—not ringing tocsin, for we have left no tocsin but our own in the Pavilion of Unity. It is an imminence of shipwreck, for the whole world to gaze at. Frightfully she labours, that poor ship, within cable-length of port ; huge peril for her. However, she has a man at the helm. Insurgent messages, received and not received ; messenger admitted blindfolded ; counsel and counter-counsel : the poor ship labours !—Vendémiaire 13th, year 4 : curious enough, of all days, it is the Fifth day of October, anniversary of that Menad-march, six years

ago ; by sacred right of Insurrection we are got thus far.

Lepelletier has seized the Church of Saint-Roch ; has seized the Pont-Neuf, our piquet there retreating without fire. Stray shots fall from Lepelletier ; rattle down on the very Tuileries Staircase. On the other hand, women advance dishevelled, shrieking, Peace ; Lepelletier behind them waving its hat in sign that we shall fraternise. Steady ! The Artillery-Officer is steady as bronze ; can, if need were, be quick as lightning. He sends eight-hundred muskets with ball-cartridges to the Convention itself ; honourable Members shall act with these in case of extremity : whereat they look grave enough. Four of the afternoon is struck. Lepelletier, making nothing by messengers, by fraternity or hat-waving, bursts out, along the Southern Quai Voltaire, along streets and passages, treble-quick in huge veritable onslaught ! Whereupon, thou bronze Artillery-Officer—? “Fire !” say the bronze lips. And roar and thunder, roar and again roar, continual, volcano-like, goes his great gun, in the Cul-de-sac Dauphin against the Church of Saint-Roch ; go his great guns on the Pont-Royal ; go all his great guns ;—blow to air some two-hundred men, mainly about the Church of Saint-Roch ! Lepelletier cannot stand such horse-play ; no Sectioner can stand it ; the Forty-thousand yield on all sides, scour towards covert. “Some hundred or so of them gathered about the Théâtre de la République ; but,” says he, “a few shells dislodged them. It was all finished at six.”

The Ship is *over* the bar, then ; free she bounds shoreward,—amid shouting and vivats ! Citoyen Buonaparte is “named General of the Interior, by acclamation ;” quelled Sections have to disarm in such humour as they may ; sacred right of Insurrection is gone forever ! The Sieyes Constitution can disembark itself, and begin marching. The miraculous Convention Ship has got to land ;—and is there, shall we figuratively say, changed, as Epic Ships are wont, into a kind of *Sea Nymph*.

never to sail more ; to roam the waste Azure, a Miracle in History !

“It is false,” says Napoleon, “that we fired first with blank charge ; it had been a waste of life to do that.” Most false : the firing was with sharp and sharpest shot : to all men it was plain that here was no sport ; the rabbets and plinths of Saint-Roch Church show splintered by it to this hour.—Singular : in old Broglie’s time, six years ago, this Whiff of Grapeshot was promised ; but it could not be given then ; could not have profited then. Now, however, the time is come for it, and the man ; and behold, you have it ; and the thing we specifically call *French Revolution* is blown into space by it, and become a thing that was !—

## CHARTISM

[“Chartism” was begun as an article for the *Quarterly Review*, “but it grew under Carlyle’s hand, and the views it puts forward are of such a nature that the Tory organ could not be expected to publish it,” and Lockhart “sent it back after a week, seemingly not without reluctance, saying he dared not.” Mill was pleased with it and wished to print it in the last number of *The Westminster Review*. But Carlyle’s wife and brother were of opinion that it should be issued as a separate work, and accordingly it appeared in pamphlet form in 1839. “Chartism” shows Carlyle’s divergence from the modified Radicalism of *Sartor Resartus*. It teaches that the remedies advocated by Liberals for the rising discontent of the working classes were quack remedies, that political economy ignored the deepest side of life, and that the doctrine of *laissez-faire* was pernicious and led to utter destruction. The pamphlet attracted much notice, many of the reviewers classing Carlyle as a Tory. “Stranger Tory, in my opinion,” he wrote, “has not been fallen in with in these later generations . . . I am not a Tory, but one of the deepest, though perhaps the quietest, of all the Radicals now extant in the world.”]

### I

## RIGHTS AND MIGHTS

(CHAPTER V)

IT is not what a man outwardly has or wants that constitutes the happiness or misery of him. Nakedness, hunger, distress of all kinds, death itself have been cheerfully suffered, when the heart was right. It is the feeling of *injustice* that is insupportable to all men. The brutalest black African cannot bear that he should be used unjustly. No man can bear it, or ought to bear it. A deeper law than any parchment-law whatsoever, a law written direct by the hand of God in the inmost being of man, incessantly protests against it. What is injustice? Another name for *disorder*, for unveracity, unreality; a

thing which veracious created Nature, even because it is not Chaos and a waste-whirling baseless Phantasm, rejects and disowns. It is not the outward pain of injustice ; that, were it even the flaying of the back with knotted scourges, the severing of the head with guillotines, is comparatively a small matter. The real smart is the soul's pain and stigma, the hurt inflicted on the moral self. The rudest clown must draw himself up into attitude of battle, and resistance to the death, if such be offered him. He cannot live under it ; his own soul aloud, and all the Universe with silent continual beckonings, says, *It cannot be.* He must revenge himself ; *revancher* himself, make himself good again,—that so *meum* may be mine, *tuum* thine, and each party standing clear on his own basis, order be restored. There is something infinitely respectable in this, and we may say universally respected ; it is the common stamp of manhood vindicating itself in all of us, the basis of whatever is worthy in all of us, and through superficial diversities, the same in all.

As disorder, insane by the nature of it, is the hatefulest of things to man, who lives by sanity and order, so injustice is the worst evil, some call it the only evil, in this world. All men submit to toil, to disappointment, to unhappiness ; it is their lot here ; but in all hearts, inextinguishable by sceptic logic, by sorrow, perversion or despair itself, there is a small still voice intimating that it is not the final lot ; that wild, waste, incoherent as it looks, a God presides over it ; that it is not an injustice, but a justice. Force itself, the hopelessness of resistance, has doubtless a composing effect ;—against inanimate *Simooms*, and much other infliction of the like sort, we have found it suffice to produce complete composure. Yet, one would say, a permanent Injustice even from an Infinite Power would prove unendurable by men. If men had lost belief in a God, their only resource against a blind No-God of Necessity and Mechanism, that held them like a hideous World-Steamengine, like a hideous Phalaris' Bull, imprisoned in its own iron belly, would be, with or without hope,—

*revolt.* They could, as Novalis says, by a “simultaneous universal act of suicide,” *depart* out of the World-Steamengine; and end, if not in victory, yet in invincibility, and unsubduable protest that such World-Steamengine was a failure and a stupidity.

Conquest, indeed, is a fact often witnessed; conquest, which seems mere wrong and force, everywhere asserts itself as a right among men. Yet if we examine, we shall find that, in this world, no conquest could ever become permanent, which did not withal show itself beneficial to the conquered as well as to conquerors. \* \* \*

Of conquest we may say that it never yet went by brute force and compulsion; conquest of that kind does not endure. Conquest, along with power of compulsion, an essential universally in human society, must bring benefit along with it, or men, of the ordinary strength of men, will fling it out. The strong man, what is he if we will consider? The wise man; the man with the gift of method, of faithfulness and valour, all of which are of the basis of wisdom; who has insight into what is what, into what will follow out of what, the eye to see and the hand to do; who is *fit* to administer, to direct, andguidingly command: he is the strong man. His muscles and bones are no stronger than ours; but his soul is stronger, his soul is wiser, clearer,—is better and nobler, for that is, has been and ever will be the root of all clearness worthy of such a name. Beautiful it is, and a gleam from the same eternal pole-star visible amid the destinies of men, that all talent, all intellect is in the first place moral;—what a world were this otherwise! But it is the heart always that sees, before the head *can* see: let us know that; and know therefore that the Good alone is deathless and victorious, that Hope is sure and steadfast, in all phases of this “Place of Hope.”—Shiftiness, quirk, attorney-cunning is a kind of thing that fancies itself, and is often fancied, to be talent; but it is luckily mistaken in that. Succeed truly it does, what is called succeeding; and even must in general succeed, if the dispensers of success be of due stupidity: men of due stupidity will needs say to it,

“*Thou art wisdom, rule thou!*” Whereupon it rules. But Nature answers, “No, this ruling of thine is not according to *my* laws ; thy wisdom was not wise enough ! Dost thou take me too for a Quackery ? For a Conventionality and Attorneyism ? This chaff that thou sowest into my bosom, though it pass at the poll-booth and elsewhere for seed-corn, *I* will not grow wheat out of it, for it is chaff !”

## II

## NEW ERAS

(CHAPTER VIII)

IN a strange rhapsodic “History of the Teuton Kindred (*Geschichte der Teutschen Sippschaft*),” not yet translated into our language, we have found a Chapter on the Eras of England, which, were there room for it, would be instructive in this place. We shall crave leave to excerpt some pages ; partly as a relief from the too near vexations of our own rather sorrowful Era ; partly as calculated to throw, more or less obliquely, some degree of light on the meanings of that. The Author is anonymous : but we have heard him called the Herr Professor Sauerteig, and indeed think we know him under that name :

“Who shall say what work and works this England has yet to do ? For what purpose this land of Britain was created, set like a jewel in the encircling blue of Ocean ; and this Tribe of Saxons, fashioned in the depths of Time, ‘on the shores of the Black Sea’ or elsewhere, ‘out of Harzgebirge rock’ or whatever other material, was sent travelling hitherward ? No man can say : it was for a work, and for works, incapable of announcement in words. Thou seest them there ; part of them stand done, and visible to the eye ; even these thou canst not *name* : how much less the others still matter of prophecy only !—They live and

labour there, these twenty million Saxon men ; they have been born into this mystery of life out of the darkness of Past Time :—how changed now since the first Father and first Mother of them set forth, quitting the tribe of *Theuth*, with passionate farewell, under questionable auspices ; on scanty bullock-cart, if they had even bullocks and a cart ; with axe and hunting-spear, to subdue a portion of our common Planet ! This Nation now has cities and seedfields, has spring-vans, dray-wagons, Long-Acre carriages, nay railway trains ; has coined-money, exchange-bills, laws, books, war-fleets, spinning-jennies, warehouses and West-India Docks : see what it has built and done, what it can and will yet build and do ! These umbrageous pleasure-woods, green meadows, shaven stubble-fields, smooth-sweeping roads ; these high-domed cities, and what they hold and bear ; this mild Good-morrow which the stranger bids thee, equitable, nay forbearant if need were, judicially calm and law-observing towards thee a stranger, what work has it not cost ? How many brawny arms, generation after generation, sank down wearied ; how many noble hearts, toiling while life lasted, and wise heads that wore themselves dim with scanning and discerning, before this waste *White-cliff*, Albion so-called, with its other Cassiterides *Tin Islands*, became a BRITISH EMPIRE ! The stream of World-History has altered its complexion ; Romans are dead out, English are come in. The red broad mark of Romanhood, stamped ineffaceably on that Chart of Time, has disappeared from the present, and belongs only to the past. England plays its part ; England too has a mark to leave, and we will hope none of the least significant. Of a truth, whosoever had, with the bodily eye, seen Hengst and Horsa mooring on the mud-beach of Thanet, on that spring morning of the Year 449 ; and then, with the spiritual eye, looked forward to New York, Calcutta, Sidney Cove, across the ages and the oceans ; and thought what Wellingtons, Washingtons, Shakespeares, Miltons, Watts, Arkwrights, William Pitts and Davie Crocketts had to issue from that business, and do

their several taskworks so,—he would have said, those leather-boats of Hengst's had a kind of cargo in them! A genealogic Mythus superior to any in the old Greek, to almost any in the old Hebrew itself; and not a Mythus either, but every fibre of it fact. An Epic Poem was there, and all manner of poems; except that the Poet has not yet made his appearance."

"Six centuries of obscure endeavour," continues Sauerteig, "which to read Historians, you would incline to call mere obscure slaughter, discord, and misendeavour; of which all that the human memory, after a thousand readings, can remember, is that it resembled, what Milton names it, the 'flocking and fighting of kites and crows:' this, in brief, is the history of the Heptarchy or Seven Kingdoms. Six centuries; a stormy spring-time, if there ever was one for a Nation. Obscure fighting of kites and crows, however, was not the History of it; but was only what the dim Historians of it saw good to record. Were not forests felled, bogs drained, fields made arable, towns built, laws made, and the Thought and Practice of men in many ways perfected? Venerable Bede had got a language which he could now not only speak, but spell and put on paper: think what lies in that. Bemurmured by the German sea-flood swinging slow with sullen roar against those hoarse Northumbrian rocks, the venerable man set down several things in a legible manner. Or was the smith idle, hammering only wartools? He had learned metallurgy, stithy-work in general; and made ploughshares withal, and adzes and mason-hammers. *Castra, Caesters or Chesters, Dons, Tons* (*Zauns, Enclosures or Towns*), not a few, did they stand there; of burnt brick, of timber, of lath-and-clay; sending up the peaceable smoke of hearths? England had a History then too; though no Historian to write it. Those 'flockings and fightings,' sad inevitable necessities, were the expensive tentative steps towards some capability of living and working in concert: experiments they were, not always conclusive, to ascertain who had the might over whom, the right over whom."

"To this English People in World-History, there have been, shall I prophesy, Two grand tasks assigned? Huge-looming through the dim tumult of the always incommensurable Present Time, outlines of two tasks disclose themselves: the grand Industrial task of conquering some half or more of this Terraqueous Planet for the use of man; then secondly, the grand Constitutional task of sharing, in some pacific durable manner, the fruit of said conquest, and showing all people how it might be done. These I will call their two tasks, discernible hitherto in World-History: in both of these they have made respectable though unequal progress. Steamengines, ploughshares, pickaxes; what is meant by conquering this Planet, they partly know. Elective franchise, ballot-box, representative assembly; how to accomplish sharing of that conquest, they do not so well know. Europe knows not; Europe vehemently asks in these days, but receives no answer, no credible answer. For as to the partial Delolmish, Benthamee, or other French or English answers, current in the proper quarters, and highly beneficial and indispensable there, thy disbelief in them as final answers, I take it, is complete."

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"Succession of rebellions? Successive clippings away of the Supreme Authority; class after class rising in revolt to say, 'We will no more be governed so'? That is not the history of the English Constitution; not altogether that. Rebellion is the means, but it is not the motive cause. The motive cause, and true secret of the matter, were always this: The necessity there was for rebelling?

"Rights I will permit thee to call everywhere 'correctly-articulated *mights*.' A dreadful business to articulate correctly! Consider those Barons of Runnymede; consider all manner of successfully revolting men! Your Great Charter has to be experimented on, by battle and debate, for a hundred-and-fifty years; is then found to *be* correct; and stands as

true *Magna Charta*,—nigh cut in pieces by a tailor, short of measures, in later generations. Mights, I say, are a dreadful business to articulate correctly ! Yet articulated they have to be ; the time comes for it, the need comes for it, and with enormous difficulty and experimenting it is got done. Call it not succession of rebellions ; call it rather succession of expansions, of enlightenments, gift of articulate utterance descending ever lower. Class after class acquires faculty of utterance,—Necessity teaching and compelling ; as the dumb man, seeing the knife at his father's throat, suddenly acquired speech ! Consider too how class after class not only acquires faculty of articulating what its might is, but likewise grows in might, acquires might or loses might ; so that always, after a space, there is not only new gift of articulating, but there is something new to articulate. Constitutional epochs will never cease among men.”

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“ And so now, the Barons, all settled and satisfied, a new class hitherto silent had begun to speak : the Middle Class, namely. In the time of James First, not only Knights of the Shire but Parliamentary Burgesses assemble, to assert, to complain and propose ; a real House of Commons has come decisively into play,—much to astonishment of James First. We call it a growth of mights, if also of necessities ; a growth of power to articulate mights, and make rights of them.

“ In those past silent centuries, among those silent classes, much had been going on. Not only had red-deer in the New and other Forests been got preserved and shot ; and treacheries of Simon de Montfort, wars of Red and White Roses, Battles of Crecy, Battles of Bosworth, and many other battles been got transacted and adjusted ; but England wholly, not without sore toil and aching bones to the millions of sires and the millions of sons these eighteen generations, had been got drained and tilled, covered with yellow harvests, beautiful and rich possessions ; the mud-wooden Caesters

and Chesters had become steeped tile-roofed compact Towns. Sheffield had taken to the manufacture of Sheffield whittles; Worstead could from wool spin yarn, and knit or weave the same into stockings or breeches for men. England had property valuable to the auctioneer; but the accumulate manufacturing, commercial, economic *skill* which lay impalpably warehoused in English hands and heads, what auctioneer could estimate?

“ Hardly an Englishman to be met with but could do something; some cunniger thing than break his fellow-creature’s head was battle-axes. The seven incorporated trades, with their million guild-brethren, with their hammers, their shuttles and tools, what an army; —fit to conquer that land of England, as we say, and to hold it conquered! Nay, strangest of all, the English people had acquired the faculty and habit of thinking,—even of believing: individual conscience had unfolded itself among them; Conscience, and Intelligence its handmaid. Ideas of innumerable kinds were circulating among these men: witness one Shakspeare, a woolcomber, poacher, or whatever else at Stratford in Warwickshire, who happened to write books! The finest human figure, as I apprehend, that Nature has hitherto seen fit to make of our widely diffused Teutonic clay. Saxon, Norman, Celt or Sarmat, I find no human soul so beautiful, these fifteen-hundred known years;—our supreme modern European man. Him England had contrived to realise: were there not ideas?

“ Ideas poetic and also Puritanic,—that had to seek utterance in the notablest way! England had got her Shakspeare; but was now about to get her Milton and Oliver Cromwell. This too we will call a new expansion, hard as it might be to articulate and adjust; this, that a man could actually have a Conscience for his own behoof, and not for his Priest’s only; that his Priest, be who he might, would henceforth have to take that fact along with him. One of the hardest things to adjust! It is not adjusted down to this hour.

It lasts onwards to the time they call 'Glorious Revolution' before so much as a reasonable truce can be made, and the war proceed by logic mainly. And still it is war, and no peace, unless we call waste vacancy peace. But it needed to be adjusted, as the others had done, as still others will do. Nobility at Runnymede cannot endure foul-play grown palpable; no more can Gentry in Long Parliament; no more can Commonalty in Parliament they name Reformed. Prynne's bloody ears were as a testimony and question to all England: 'Englishmen, is this fair?' England, no longer continent of herself, answered, bellowing as with the voice of lions: 'No, it is not fair!'"

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"As to the Third Constitutional controversy, that of the Working Classes, which now debates itself everywhere these fifty years, in France specifically since 1789, in England too since 1831, it is doubtless the hardest of all to get articulated: finis of peace, or even reasonable truce on this, is a thing I have little prospect of for several generations. Dark, wild-weltering, dreary, boundless; nothing heard on it yet but ballot-boxes, Parliamentary arguing; not to speak of much far worse arguing, by steel and lead, from Valmy to Waterloo, to Peterloo!"—

"And yet of Representative Assemblies may not this good be said: That contending parties in a country do thereby ascertain one another's strength? They fight there, since fight they must, by petition, Parliamentary eloquence, not by sword, bayonet and bursts of military cannon. Why do men fight at all, if it be not that they are yet *unacquainted* with one another's strength, and must fight and ascertain it? Knowing that thou art stronger than I, that thou canst compel me, I will submit to thee: unless I chance to prefer extermination, and slightly circuitous suicide, there is on other course for me. That in England, by public meetings, by petitions, by elections, leading-articles, and other jangling hubbub and tongue-fence which perpetually goes

on everywhere in that country, people ascertain one another's strength, and the most obdurate House of Lords has to yield and give in before it come to cannonading and guillotinement: this is a saving characteristic of England. Nay, at bottom, is not this the celebrated English Constitution itself? This *un-spoken* Constitution, whereof Privilege of Parliament, Money-Bill, Mutiny-Bill, and all that could be spoken and enacted hitherto, is not the essence and body, but only the shape and skin? Such Constitution is, in our times, verily invaluable."

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"Long stormy spring-time, wet contentious April, winter chilling the lap of very May; but at length the season of summer does come. So long the tree stood naked; angry wiry naked boughs moaning and creaking in the wind: you would say, Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? Not so; we must wait; all things will have their time.—Of the man Shakspeare, and his Elizabethan Era, with its Sydneys, Raleighs, Bacons, what could we say? That it was a spiritual flower-time. Suddenly, as with the breath of June, your rude naked tree is touched; bursts into leaves and flowers, *such* leaves and flowers. The past long ages of nakedness, and wintry fermentation and elaboration, have done their part though seeming to do nothing. The past silence has got a voice, all the more significant the longer it had continued silent. In trees, men, institutions, creeds, nations, in all things extant and growing in this Universe, we may note such vicissitudes and budding-times. Moreover there are spiritual budding-times; and then also there are physical, appointed to nations.

"Thus in the middle of that poor calumniated Eighteenth Century, see once more! Long winter again past, the dead-seeming tree proves to be living, to have been always living; after motionless times, every bough shoots forth on the sudden, very strangely:—it now turns out that this favoured England was not only to

have had her Shakspeares, Bacons, Sydneys, but to have her Watts, Arkwrights, Brindleys ! We will honour greatness in all kinds. The Prospero evoked the singing of Ariel, and took captive the world with those melodies : the same Prospero can send his Firedemons panting across all oceans ; shooting with the speed of meteors, on cunning highways, from end to end of kingdoms ; and make Iron his missionary, preaching *its* evangel to the brute Primeval Powers, which listen and obey : neither is this small. Manchester, with its cotton-fuzz, its smoke and dust, its tumult and contentious squalor, is hideous to thee ? Think not so : a precious substance, beautiful as magic dreams and yet no dream but a reality, lies hidden in that noisome wrappage ;—a wrappage struggling indeed (look at Chartisms and suchlike) to cast itself off, and leave the beauty free and visible there ! Hast thou heard, with sound ears, the awakening of a Manchester, on Monday morning, at half-past five by the clock ; the rushing-off of its thousand mills, like the boom of an Atlantic tide, ten-thousand times ten-thousand spools and spindles all set humming there,—it is perhaps, if thou knew it well, sublime as a Niagara, or more so. Cotton-spinning is the clothing of the naked in its result ; the triumph of man over matter in its means. Soot and despair are not the essence of it ; they are divisible from it,—at this hour, are they not crying fiercely to be divided ? The great Goethe, looking at cotton Switzerland, declared it, I am told, to be of all things that he had seen in this world the most poetical. Whereat friend Kanzler von Müller, in search of the palpable picturesque, could not but stare wide-eyed. Nevertheless our World-Poet knew well what he was saying."

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“Richard Arkwright, it would seem, was not a beautiful man ; no romance-hero with haughty eyes, Apollo-lip, and gesture like the herald Mercury ; a plain almost gross, bag-cheeked, potbellied Lancashire man,

with an air of painful reflection, yet also of copious free digestion ;—a man stationed by the community to shave certain dusty beards, in the Northern parts of England, at a halfpenny each. To such end, we say, by forethought, oversight, accident and arrangement, had Richard Arkwright been, by the community of England and his own consent, set apart. Nevertheless, in strapping of razors, in lathering of dusty beards, and the contradictions and confusions attendant thereon, the man had notions in that rough head of his ; spindles, shuttles, wheels and contrivances plying ideally within the same : rather hopeless-looking ; which, however, he did at last bring to bear. Not without difficulty ! His townsfolk rose in mob round him, for threatening to shorten labour, to shorten wages ; so that he had to fly, with broken wash-pots, scattered household, and seek refuge elsewhere. Nay his wife too, as I learn, rebelled ; burnt his wooden model of his spinning-wheel ; resolute that he should stick to his razors rather ;—for which, however, he decisively, as thou wilt rejoice to understand, packed her out of doors. O reader, what a Historical Phenomenon is that bag-cheeked, potbellied, much-enduring, much-inventing barber ! French Revolutions were a-brewing : to resist the same in any measure, imperial Kaisers were impotent without the cotton and cloth of England ; and it was this man that had to give England the power of cotton.”

“ Neither had Watt of the Steamengine a heroic origin, any kindred with the princes of this world. The princes of this world were shooting their partridges ; noisily, in Parliament or elsewhere, solving the question, Head or tail ? while this man with blackened fingers, with grim brow, was searching out, in his workshop, the Fire-secret ; or, having found it, was painfully wending to and fro in quest of a ‘monied man,’ as indispensable man-midwife of the same. Reader, thou shalt admire what is admirable, not what is dressed in admirable ; learn to know the British lion even when he is not throne-supporter, and also the

British jackass in lion's skin even when he is. Ah, couldst thou always, what a world were it ! But has the Berlin Royal Academy or any English Useful-Knowledge Society discovered, for instance, who it was that first scratched earth with a stick ; and threw *corns*, the biggest he could find, into it ; seedgrains of a certain grass, which he named *white* or *wheat* ? Again, what is the whole Tees-water and other breeding-world to him who stole home from the forests the first bison-calf, and bred it up to be a tame bison, a milk-cow ? No machine of all they showed me in Birmingham can be put in comparison for ingenuity with that figure of the wedge named *knife*, of the wedges named *saw*, of the lever named *hammer* :—nay is it not with the hammer-knife, named *sword*, that men fight, and maintain any semblance of constituted authority that yet survives among us ? The steamengine I call fire-demon and great ; but it is nothing to the invention of *fire*. Prometheus, Tubalcain, Triptolemus ! Are not our greatest men as good as lost ? The men that walk daily among us, clothing us, warming us, feeding us, walk shrouded in darkness, mere mythic men.

“ It is said, ideas produce revolutions ; and truly so they do ; not spiritual ideas only, but even mechanical. In this clanging clashing universal Sword-dance that the European world now dances for the last half-century, Voltaire is but one choragus, where Richard Arkwright is another. Let it dance itself out. When Arkwright shall have become mythic like Arachne, we shall still spin in peaceable profit by him ; and the Sword-dance, with all its sorrowful shufflings, Waterloo waltzes, Moscow gallopades, how forgotten will that be ! ”

### III

## EDUCATION

(CHAPTER X)

WHO would suppose that Education were a thing which had to be advocated on the ground of local expediency, or indeed on any ground? As if it stood not on the basis of everlasting duty, as a prime necessity of man. It is a thing that should need no advocating; much as it does actually need. To impart the gift of thinking to those who cannot think, and yet who could in that case think: this, one would imagine, was the first function a government had to set about discharging. Were it not a cruel thing to see, in any province of empire, the inhabitants living all mutilated in their limbs, each strong man with his right arm lamed? How much crueler to find the strong soul, with its eyes still sealed, its eyes extinct so that it sees not! Light has come into the world, but to this poor peasant it has come in vain. For six thousand years the Sons of Adam, in sleepless effort, have been devising, doing, discovering; in mysterious infinite indissoluble communion, warring, a little band of brothers, against the great black empire of Necessity and Night; they have accomplished such a conquest and conquests: and to this man it is all as if it had not been. The four-and-twenty letters of the Alphabet are still Runic enigmas to him. He passes by on the other side; and that great Spiritual Kingdom, the toilwon conquest of his own brothers, all that his brothers have conquered, is a thing non-extant for him. An invisible empire; he knows it not, suspects it not. And is it not his withal; the conquest of his own brothers, the lawfully acquired possession of all men? Baleful enchantment lies over him, from generation to generation; he knows not that such an empire is his, that such an empire is at all. O, what are bills of rights, emancipations of black slaves

into black apprentices, lawsuits in chancery for some short usufruct of a bit of land? The grand "seedfield of Time" is this man's, and you give it him not. Time's seedfield, which includes the Earth and all her seedfields and pearl-oceans, nay her sowers too and pearl-divers, all that was wise and heroic and victorious here below; of which the Earth's centuries are but as furrows, for it stretches forth from the Beginning onward even into this Day!

"My inheritance, how lordly wide and fair;  
Time is my fair seedfield, to Time I'm heir!"

Heavier wrong is not done under the sun. It lasts from year to year, from century to century; the blinded sire slaves himself out, and leaves a blinded son; and men, made in the image of God, continue as two-legged beasts of labour;—and in the largest empire of the world, it is a debate whether a small fraction of the Revenue of one Day (30,000*l.* is but that) shall, after Thirteen Centuries, be laid out on it. Have we Governors, have we Teachers; have we had a Church these thirteen hundred years? What is an Overseer of souls, an Archoverseer, Archiepiscopus? Is he something? If so, let him lay his hand on his heart, and say what thing!

But quitting all that, of which the human soul cannot well speak in terms of civility, let us observe now that Education is not only an eternal duty, but has at length become even a temporary and ephemeral one, which the necessities of the hour will oblige us to look after. These Twenty-four million labouring men, if their affairs remain unregulated, chaotic, will burn ricks and mills; reduce us, themselves and the world into ashes and ruin. Simply their affairs cannot remain unregulated, chaotic; but must be regulated, brought into some kind of order. What intellect were able to regulate them? The intellect of a Bacon, the energy of a Luther, if left to their own strength, might pause in dismay before such a task; a Bacon and Luther added together, to be perpetual prime minister over us, could not do it. No one great and greatest intellect can do it. What can?

Only Twenty-four million ordinary intellects, once awakened into action ; these, well presided over, may. Intellect, insight, is the discernment of order in disorder ; it is the discovery of the will of Nature, of God's will ; the beginning of the capability to walk according to that. With perfect intellect, were such possible without perfect morality, the world would be perfect ; its efforts unerringly correct, its results continually successful, its condition faultless. Intellect is like light ; the Chaos becomes a World under it : *fiat lux*. These Twenty-four million intellects are but common intellects ; but they are intellects ; in earnest about the matter, instructed each about his own province of it ; labouring each perpetually, with what partial light can be attained, to bring such province into rationality. From the partial determinations and their conflict, springs the universal. Precisely what quantity of intellect was in the Twenty-four millions will be exhibited by the result they arrive at ; that quantity and no more. According as there was intellect or no intellect in the individuals, will the general conclusion they make out embody itself as a world-healing Truth and Wisdom, or as a baseless fateful Hallucination, a Chimæra breathing *not* fabulous fire !

Dissenters call for one scheme of Education, the Church objects ; this party objects, and that ; there is endless objection, by him and by her and by it : a subject encumbered with difficulties on every side ! Pity that difficulties exist ; that Religion, of all things, should occasion difficulties. We do not extenuate them : in their reality they are considerable ; in their appearance and pretension, they are insuperable ; heart-appalling to all Secretaries of the Home Department. For, in very truth, how can Religion be divorced from Education ? An irreverent knowledge is no knowledge ; may be a development of the logical or other handicraft faculty inward or outward ; but is no culture of the soul of a man. A knowledge that ends in barren self-worship, comparative indifference or contempt for all God's Universe except one insignificant item thereof, what is it ? Handicraft development, and even shallow as

handicraft. Nevertheless is handicraft itself, and the habit of the merest logic, nothing? It is already something; it is the indispensable beginning of everything! Wise men know it to be an indispensable something; not yet much; and would so gladly superadd to it the element whereby it may become all. Wise men would not quarrel in attempting this; they would lovingly coöperate in attempting it.

"And now how teach religion?" so asks the indignant Ultra-radical, cited above; an Ultra-radical seemingly not of the Benthamee species, with whom, though his dialect is far different, there are sound Churchmen, we hope, who have some fellow-feeling: "How teach religion? By plying with liturgies, catechisms, credos; droning thirty-nine or other articles incessantly into the infant ear? Friends! In that case, why not apply to Birmingham, and have Machines made, and set up at all street-corners, in highways and byways, to repeat and vociferate the same, not ceasing night or day? The genius of Birmingham is adequate to that. Albertus Magnus had a leather man that could articulate; not to speak of Martinus Scriblerus' Nürnberg man that could reason as well as we know who! Depend upon it, Birmingham can make machines to repeat liturgies and articles; to do whatsoever feat is mechanical. And what were all schoolmasters, nay all priests and churches, compared with this Birmingham Iron Church! Votes of two millions in aid of the Church were then something. You order, at so many pounds a-head, so many thousand iron parsons as your grant covers; and fix them by satisfactory masonry in all quarters wheresoever wanted, to preach there independent of the world. In loud thoroughfares, still more in unawakened districts, troubled with argumentative infidelity, you make the windpipes wider, strengthen the main steam-cylinder; your parson preaches, to the due pitch, while you give him coal; and fears no man or thing. Here were a 'Church-extension'; to which I, with my last penny, did I believe in it, would subscribe.—Ye blind leaders

of the blind ! Are we Calmucks, that pray by turning of a rotatory calabash with written prayers in it ? Is Mammon and machinery the means of converting human souls, as of spinning cotton ? Is God, as Jean Paul predicted it would be, become verily a Force ; the Æther too a Gas ! Alas, that Atheism should have got the length of putting on priests' vestments, and penetrating into the sanctuary itself ! Can dronings of articles, repetitions of liturgies, and all the cash and contrivance of Birmingham and the Bank of England united bring ethereal fire into a human soul, quicken it out of earthly darkness into heavenly wisdom ? Soul is kindled only by soul. To 'teach' religion, the first thing needful, and also the last and the only thing, is finding of a man who *has* religion. All else follows from this, church-building, church-extension, whatever else is needful follows ; without this nothing will follow."

From which we for our part conclude that the method of teaching religion to the English people is still far behindhand ; that the wise and pious may well ask themselves in silence wistfully, "How is that last priceless element, by which education becomes perfect, to be superadded ?" and the unwise who think themselves pious, answering aloud, "By this method, By that method," long argue of it to small purpose.

But now, in the mean time, could not, by some fit official person, some fit announcement be made, in words well-weighed, in plan well-schemed, adequately representing the facts of the thing, That after thirteen centuries of waiting, he the official person, and England with him, was minded now to have the mystery of the Alphabetic Letters imparted to all human souls in this realm ? Teaching of religion was a thing he could not undertake to settle this day ; it would be work for a day after this ; the work of this day was teaching of the alphabet to all people. The miraculous art of reading and writing, such seemed to him the needful preliminary of all teaching, the first corner-stone of what foundation soever could be laid for what edifice soever, in the

teaching kind. Let pious Churchism make haste, let pious Dissenterism make haste, let all pious preachers and missionaries make haste, bestir themselves according to their zeal and skill : he the official person stood up for the Alphabet ; and was even impatient for it, having waited thirteen centuries now. He insisted, and would take no denial, postponement, promise, excuse or subterfuge, That all English persons should be taught to read. He appealed to all rational Englishmen, of all creeds, classes and colours, Whether this was not a fair demand ; nay whether it was not an indispensable one in these days, Swing and Chartism having risen ? For a choice of inoffensive Hornbooks, and Schoolmasters able to teach reading, he trusted the mere secular sagacity of a National Collective Wisdom, in proper committee, might be found sufficient. He purposed to appoint such Schoolmasters, to venture on the choice of such Hornbooks ; to send a Schoolmaster and Hornbook into every township, parish and hamlet of England ; so that, in ten years hence, an Englishman who could not read might be acknowledged as the monster, which he really is !

## HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP

[In 1837 Carlyle, at the suggestion of Harriet Martineau and with the help of Mill, Frederick Denison Maurice, and other friends, gave a course of lectures on "German Literature," which realised £135 and tided him over his then pecuniary embarrassment. This course was followed by three others: "The History of European Literature" in 1838, "Revolutions" in 1839, and "Heroes and Hero-worship" in 1840. The last course was published in 1841. The book had a large sale, running into several editions, and it has remained one of the most popular of his works. Its leading thought—continually present in Carlyle's writings—is that every advance made by mankind has been through the agency of men endowed with exceptional qualities of mind and character who have appeared at favoured epochs in the world's history. The main business of government was, he thought, to find these great men, "the fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of mankind," and then to gain for them full reverence and obedience. Though his lectures were highly successful, Carlyle did not care for public speaking, and after 1840 he did not address a large audience until 1866, when he was elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University.]

### I

#### THE HERO AS POET. DANTE ; SHAKSPEARE (FROM LECTURE III)

THE Hero as Divinity, the Hero as Prophet, are productions of old ages; not to be repeated in the new. They presuppose a certain rudeness of conception, which the progress of mere scientific knowledge puts an end to. There needs to be, as it were, a world vacant, or almost vacant of scientific forms, if men in their loving wonder are to fancy their fellow-man either a god or one speaking with the voice of a god. Divinity and Prophet are past. We are now to see our Hero in the less ambitious, but also less questionable, character

of Poet ; a character which does not pass. The Poet is a heroic figure belonging to all ages ; whom all ages possess, when once he is produced, whom the newest age as the oldest may produce ;—and will produce, always when Nature pleases. Let Nature send a Hero-soul ; in no age is it other than possible that he may be shaped into a Poet.

Hero, Prophet, Poet,—many different names, in different times and places, do we give to Great Men ; according to varieties we note in them, according to the sphere in which they have displayed themselves ! We might give many more names, on this same principle. I will remark again, however, as a fact not unimportant to be understood, that the different *sphere* constitutes the grand origin of such distinction ; that the Hero can be Poet, Prophet, King, Priest or what you will, according to the kind of world he finds himself born into. I confess, I have no notion of a truly great man that could not be *all* sorts of men. The Poet who could merely sit on a chair, and compose stanzas, would never make a stanza worth much. He could not sing the Heroic warrior, unless he himself were at least a Heroic warrior too. I fancy there is in him the Politician, the Thinker, Legislator, Philosopher ;—in one or the other degree, he could have been, he is all these. So too I cannot understand how a Mirabeau, with that great glowing heart, with the fire that was in it, with the bursting tears that were in it, could not have written verses, tragedies, poems, and touched all hearts in that way, had his course of life and education led him thitherward. The grand fundamental character is that of Great Man ; that the man be great. Napoleon has words in him which are like Austerlitz Battles. Louis Fourteenth's Marshals are a kind of poetical men withal ; the things Turenne says are full of sagacity and geniality, like sayings of Samuel Johnson. The great heart, the clear deep-seeing eye : there it lies ; no man whatever, in what province soever, can prosper at all without these. Petrarch and Boccaccio did diplomatic messages, it seems, quite well : one can easily believe

it; they had done things a little harder than these! Burns, a gifted song-writer, might have made a still better Mirabeau. Shakspeare,—one knows not what *he* could not have made, in the supreme degree. \* \* \*

Poet and Prophet differ greatly in our loose modern notions of them. In some old languages, again, the titles are synonymous; *Vates* means both Prophet and Poet: and indeed at all times, Prophet and Poet, well understood, have much kindred of meaning. Fundamentally indeed they are still the same; in this most important respect especially, That they have penetrated both of them into the sacred mystery of the Universe; what Goethe calls “the open secret.” “Which is the great secret?” asks one.—“The *open secret*,”—open to all, seen by almost none! That divine mystery, which lies everywhere in all Beings, “the Divine Idea of the World, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance,” as Fichte styles it; of which all Appearance, from the starry sky to the grass of the field, but especially the Appearance of Man and his work, is but the *vesture*, the embodiment that renders it visible. This divine mystery *is* in all times and in all places; veritably *is*. In most times and places it is greatly overlooked; and the Universe, definable always in one or the other dialect, as the realised Thought of God, is considered a trivial, inert, commonplace matter,—as if, says the Satirist, it were a dead thing, which some upholsterer had put together! It could do no good, at present, to speak much about this; but it is a pity for every one of us if we do not know it, live ever in the knowledge of it. Really a most mournful pity;—a failure to live at all, if we live otherwise!

But now, I say, whoever may forget this divine mystery, the *Vates*, whether Prophet or Poet, has penetrated into it; is a man sent hither to make it more impressively known to us. That always is his message; he is to reveal that to us,—that sacred mystery which he more than others lives ever present with. While others forget it, he knows it;—I might say, he has been driven to know it; without consent asked of *him*, he

finds himself living in it, bound to live in it. Once more, here is no Hearsay, but a direct Insight and Belief ; this man too could not help being a sincere man ! Whosoever may live in the shows of things, it is for him a necessity of nature to live in the very fact of things. A man once more, in earnest with the Universe, though all others were but toying with it. He is a *Vates*, first of all, in virtue of being sincere. So far Poet and Prophet, participators in the "open secret," are one.

With respect to their distinction again : The *Vates* Prophet, we might say, has seized that sacred mystery rather on the moral side, as Good and Evil, Duty and Prohibition ; the *Vates* Poet on what the Germans call the æsthetic side, as Beautiful, and the like. The one we may call a revealer of what we are to do, the other of what we are to love. But indeed these two provinces run into one another, and cannot be disjoined. The Prophet too has his eye on what we are to love : how else shall he know what it is we are to do ? The highest Voice ever heard on this earth said withal, "Consider the lilies of the field ; they toil not, neither do they spin : yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." A glance, that, into the deepest deep of Beauty. "The lilies of the field,"--dressed finer than earthly princes, springing-up there in the humble furrow-field ; a beautiful *eye* looking-out on you, from the great inner Sea of Beauty ! How could the rude Earth make these, if her Essence, rugged as she looks and is, were not inwardly Beauty ? In this point of view, too, a saying of Goethe's, which has staggered several, may have meaning : "The Beautiful," he intimates, "is higher than the Good ; the Beautiful includes in it the Good." The *true* Beautiful ; which however, I have said somewhere, "differs from the *false* as Heaven does from Vauxhall !" So much for the distinction and identity of Poet and Prophet.— \* \* \*

The *Vates* Poet, with his melodious Apocalypse of Nature, seems to hold a poor rank among us, in comparison with the *Vates* Prophet ; his function, and our esteem of him for his function, alike slight. The Hero taken as

Divinity ; the Hero taken as Prophet ; then next the Hero taken only as Poet : does it not look as if our estimate of the Great Man, epoch after epoch, were continually diminishing ? We take him first for a god, then for one god-inspired ; and now in the next stage of it, his most miraculous word gains from us only the recognition that he is a Poet, beautiful verse-maker, man of genius, or such like !—It looks so ; but I persuade myself that intrinsically it is not so. If we consider well, it will perhaps appear that in man still there is the *same* altogether peculiar admiration for the Heroic Gift, by what name soever called, that there at any time was. I should say, if we do not now reckon a Great Man literally divine, it is that our notions of God, of the supreme unattainable Fountain of Splendour, Wisdom and Heroism, are ever rising *higher* ; not altogether that our reverence for these qualities, as manifested in our like, is getting lower. This is worth taking thought of. Sceptical Dilettantism, the curse of these ages, a curse which will not last forever, does indeed in this the highest province of human things, as in all provinces, make sad work ; and our reverence for great men, all crippled, blinded, paralytic as it is, comes-out in poor plight, hardly recognisable. Men worship the shows of great men ; the most disbelieve that there is any reality of great men to worship. The dreariest, fatalest faith ; believing which, one would literally despair of human things. Nevertheless look, for example, at Napoleon ! A Corsican lieutenant of artillery ; that is the show of *him* : yet is he not obeyed, worshipped after his sort, as all the Tiaraed and Diademed of the world put together could not be ? High Duchesses, and ostlers of inns, gather round the Scottish rustic, Burns ;—a strange feeling dwelling in each that they never heard a man like this ; that, on the whole, this is the man ! In the secret heart of these people it still dimly reveals itself, though there is no accredited way of uttering it at present, that this rustic, with his black brows and flashing sun-eyes, and strange words moving laughter and tears, is of a dignity far beyond all others, incommensurable with all others.

Do not we feel it so? But now, were Dilettantism, Scepticism, Triviality, and all that sorrowful brood, cast-out of us,—as, by God's blessing, they shall one day be; were faith in the shows of things entirely swept-out, replaced by clear faith in the *things*, so that a man acted on the impulse of that only, and counted the other non-extant; what a new livelier feeling towards this Burns were it!

Nay here in these ages, such as they are, have we not two mere Poets, if not deified, yet we may say beatified? Shakspeare and Dante are Saints of Poetry; really, if we will think of it, *canonised*, so that it is impiety to meddle with them. The unguided instinct of the world, working across all these perverse impediments, has arrived at such result. Dante and Shakspeare are a peculiar Two. They dwell apart, in a kind of royal solitude; none equal, none second to them: in the general feeling of the world, a certain transcendentalism, a glory as of complete perfection, invests these two. They *are* canonised, though no Pope or Cardinals took hand in doing it! Such, in spite of every perverting influence, in the most unheroic times, is still our indestructible reverence for heroism.—We will look a little at these Two, the Poet Dante and the Poet Shakspeare: what little it is permitted us to say here of the Hero as Poet will most fitly arrange itself in that fashion.

Many volumes have been written by way of commentary on Dante and his Book; yet, on the whole, with no great result. His Biography is, as it were, irrecoverably lost for us. An unimportant, wandering, sorrowstricken man, not much note was taken of him while he lived; and the most of that has vanished, in the long space that now intervenes. It is five centuries since he ceased writing and living here. After all commentaries, the Book itself is mainly what we know of him. The Book;—and one might add that Portrait commonly attributed to Giotto, which, looking on it, you cannot help inclining to think genuine, whoever did it. To me it is a most touching face; perhaps of all

faces that I know, the most so. Lonely there, painted as on vacancy, with the simple laurel wound round it ; the deathless sorrow and pain, the known victory which is also deathless ;—significant of the whole history of Dante ! I think it is the mournfullest face that ever was painted from reality ; an altogether tragic, heart-affecting face. There is in it, as foundation of it, the softness, tenderness, gentle affection as of a child ; but all this is as if congealed into sharp contradiction, into abnegation, isolation, proud hopeless pain. A soft ethereal soul looking-out so stern, implacable, grim-trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice ! Withal it is a silent pain too, a silent scornful one : the lip is curled in a kind of godlike disdain of the thing that is eating-out his heart,—as if it were withal a mean insignificant thing, as if he whom it had power to torture and strangle were greater than it. The face of one wholly in protest, and lifelong unsurrendering battle, against the world. Affection all converted into indignation : an implacable indignation ; slow, equable, silent, like that of a god ! The eye too, it looks-out as in a kind of *surprise*, a kind of inquiry, Why the world was of such a sort ? This is Dante : so he looks, this “ voice of ten silent centuries,” and sings us “ his mystic unfathomable song.”

The little that we know of Dante's Life corresponds well enough with this Portrait and this Book. He was born at Florence, in the upper class of society, in the year 1265. His education was the best then going ; much school-divinity, Aristotelean logic, some Latin classics,—no inconsiderable insight into certain provinces of things : and Dante, with his earnest intelligent nature, we need not doubt, learned better than most all that was learnable. He has a clear cultivated understanding, and of great subtlety ; this best fruit of education he had contrived to realise from these scholastics. He knows accurately and well what lies close to him ; but, in such a time, without printed books or free intercourse, he could not know well what was distant : the small clear light, most luminous for what is near, breaks

itself into singular *chiaroscuro* striking on what is far off. This was Dante's learning from the schools. In life, he had gone through the usual destinies; been twice out campaigning as a soldier for the Florentine State, been on embassy; had in his thirty-fifth year, by natural gradation of talent and service, become one of the Chief Magistrates of Florence. He had met in boyhood a certain Beatrice Portinari, a beautiful little girl of his own age and rank, and grown-up thenceforth in partial sight of her, in some distant intercourse with her. All readers know his graceful affecting account of this; and then of their being parted; of her being wedded to another, and of her death soon after. She makes a great figure in Dante's Poem; seems to have made a great figure in his life. Of all beings it might seem as if she, held apart from him, far apart at last in the dim Eternity, were the only one he had ever with his whole strength of affection loved. She died: Dante himself was wedded; but it seems not happily, far from happily. I fancy, the rigorous earnest man, with his keen excitabilities, was not altogether easy to make happy. \* \* \*

I give Dante my highest praise when I say of his *Divine Comedy* that it is, in all senses, genuinely a Song. In the very sound of it there is a *canto fermo*; it proceeds as by a chant. The language, his simple *terza rima*, doubtless helped him in this. One reads along naturally with a sort of *lilt*. But I add, that it could not be otherwise; for the essence and material of the work are themselves rhythmic. Its depth, and rapt passion and sincerity, makes it musical;—go *deep* enough, there is music everywhere. A true inward symmetry, what one calls an architectural harmony, reigns in it, proportionates it all: architectural; which also partakes of the character of music. The three kingdoms, *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, *Paradiso*, look-out on one another like compartments of a great edifice; a great supernatural world-cathedral, piled-up there, stern, solemn, awful; Dante's World of Souls! It is, at bottom, the *sincerest* of all Poems; sincerity, here too, we find to be the

measure of worth. It came deep out of the author's heart of hearts ; and it goes deep, and through long generations, into ours. The people of Verona, when they saw him on the streets, used to say, "*Eccovi l' uom ch' è stato all' Inferno*, See, there is the man that was in Hell !" Ah yes, he had been in Hell ;—in Hell enough, in long severe sorrow and struggle ; as the like of him is pretty sure to have been. Commedias that come-out *divine* are not accomplished otherwise. Thought, true labour of any kind, highest virtue itself, is it not the daughter of Pain ? Born as out of the black whirlwind ;—true *effort*, in fact, as of a captive struggling to free himself : that is Thought. In all ways we are "to become perfect through *suffering*."—But, as I say, no work known to me is so elaborated as this of Dante's. It has all been as if molten, in the hottest furnace of his soul. It had made him "lean" for many years. Not the general whole only ; every compartment of it is worked-out, with intense earnestness, into truth, into clear visuality. Each answers to the other ; each fits in its place, like a marble stone accurately hewn and polished. It is the soul of Dante, and in this the soul of the middle ages, rendered forever rhythmically visible there. No light task ; a right intense one : but a task which is *done*.

Perhaps one would say, *intensity*, with the much that depends on it, is the prevailing character of Dante's genius. Dante does not come before us as a large catholic mind ; rather as a narrow, and even sectarian mind : it is partly the fruit of his age and position, but partly too of his own nature. His greatness has, in all senses, concentered itself into fiery emphasis and depth. He is world-great not because he is world-wide, but because he is world-deep. Through all objects he pierces as it were down into the heart of Being. I know nothing so intense as Dante. Consider, for example, to begin with the outermost development of his intensity, consider how he paints. He has a great power of vision ; seizes the very type of a thing ; presents that and nothing more. You remember that first view he gets of the Hall of Dite : *red* pinnacle, *redhot* cone of iron glowing

through the dim immensity of gloom ;—so vivid, so distinct, visible at once and forever ! It is as an emblem of the whole genius of Dante. There is a brevity, an abrupt precision in him ; Tacitus is not briefer, more condensed ; and then in Dante it seems a natural condensation, spontaneous to the man. One smiting word ; and then there is silence, nothing more said. His silence is more eloquent than words. It is strange with what a sharp decisive grace he snatches the true likeness of a matter ; cuts-into the matter as with a pen of fire. Plutus, the blustering giant, collapses at Virgil's rebuke ; it is "as the sails sink, the mast being suddenly broken." Or that poor Brunetto Latini, with the *cotto aspetto*, "face baked," parched brown and lean ; and the "fiery snow" that falls on them there, a "fiery snow without wind," slow, deliberate, never-ending ! Or the lids of those Tombs ; square sarcophaguses, in that silent dim-burning Hall, each with its Soul in torment ; the lids laid open there ; they are to be shut at the Day of Judgment, through Eternity. And how Farinata rises ; and how Cavalcante falls—at hearing of his Son, and the past tense "*fue*" ! The very movements in Dante have something brief ; swift, decisive, almost military. It is of the inmost essence of his genius this sort of painting. The fiery, swift Italian nature of the man, so silent, passionate, with its quick abrupt movements, its silent "pale rages," speaks itself in these things. \* \* \*

Dante's painting is not graphic only, brief, true, and of a vividness as of fire in dark night ; taken on the wider scale, it is everyway noble, and the outcome of a great soul. Francesca and her Lover, what qualities in that ! A thing woven as out of rainbows, on a ground of eternal black. A small flute-voice of infinite wail speaks there, into our very heart of hearts. A touch of womanhood in it too : *della bella persona, che mi fu tolta* ; and how, even in the Pit of woe, it is a solace that *he* will never part from her ! Saddest tragedy in these *alti guai*. And the racking winds, in that *aer bruno*, whirl them away again, to wail forever !—Strange to think : Dante was the friend of this poor Francesca's

father ; Francesca herself may have sat upon the Poet's knee, as a bright innocent little child. Infinite pity, yet also infinite rigour of law : it is so Nature is made ; it is so Dante discerned that she was made. What a paltry notion is that of his *Divine Comedy*'s being a poor splenetic impotent terrestrial libel ; putting those into Hell whom he could not be avenged-upon on earth ! I suppose if ever pity, tender as a mother's, was in the heart of any man, it was in Dante's. But a man who does not know rigour cannot pity either. His very pity will be cowardly, egoistic,—sentimentality, or little better. I know not in the world an affection equal to that of Dante. It is a tenderness, a trembling, longing, pitying love : like the wail of Æolian harps, soft, soft ; like a child's young heart ;—and then that stern, sore-saddened heart ! These longings of his towards his Beatrice ; their meeting together in the *Paradiso* ; his gazing in her pure transfigured eyes, her that had been purified by death so long, separated from him so far :—one likens it to the song of angels ; it is among the purest utterances of affection, perhaps the very purest, that ever came out of a human soul. \* \* \*

Dante's Hell, Purgatory, Paradise, are a symbol withal, an emblematic representation of his Belief about this Universe :—some Critic in a future age, like those Scandinavian ones the other day, who has ceased altogether to think as Dante did, may find this too all an "Allegory," perhaps an idle Allegory ! It is a sublime embodiment, or sublimest, of the soul of Christianity. It expresses, as in huge world-wide architectural emblems, how the Christian Dante felt Good and Evil to be the two polar elements of this Creation, on which it all turns ; that these two differ not by *preferability* of one to the other, but by incompatibility absolute and infinite ; that the one is excellent and high as light and Heaven, the other hideous, black as Gehenna and the Pit of Hell ! Everlasting Justice, yet with Penitence, with everlasting Pity,—all Christianity, as Dante and the Middle Ages had it, is emblemed here. Emblemed : and yet, as I urged the other day, with what entire truth

of purpose ; how unconscious of any emblemimg ! Hell, Purgatory, Paradise : these things were not fashioned as emblems ; was there, in our Modern European Mind, any thought at all of their being emblems ! Were they not indubitable awful facts ; the whole heart of man taking them for practically true, all Nature everywhere confirming them ? So is it always in these things. Men do not believe an Allegory. The future Critic, whatever his new thought may be, who considers this of Dante to have been all got-up as an Allegory, will commit one sore mistake !—Paganism we recognised as a veracious expression of the earnest awe-struck feeling of man towards the Universe ; veracious, true once, and still not without worth for us. But mark here the difference of Paganism and Christianism ; one great difference. Paganism emblemed chiefly the Operations of Nature ; the destinies, efforts, combinations, vicissitudes of things and men in this world ; Christianism emblemed the Law of Human Duty, the Moral Law of Man. One was for the sensuous nature : a rude helpless utterance of the *first* Thought of men,—the chief recognised virtue, Courage, Superiority to Fear. The other was not for the sensuous nature, but for the moral. What a progress is here, if in that one respect only !—

And so in this Dante, as we said, had ten silent centuries, in a very strange way, found a voice. The *Divina Commedia* is of Dante's writing ; yet in truth it belongs to ten Christian centuries, only the finishing of it is Dante's. So always. The craftsman there, the smith with that metal of his, with these tools, with these cunning methods,—how little of all he does is properly *his* work ! All past inventive men work there with him ;—as indeed with all of us, in all things. Dante is the spokesman of the Middle Ages ; the Thought they lived by stands here, in everlasting music. These sublime ideas of his, terrible and beautiful, are the fruit of the Christian Meditation of all the good men who had gone before him. Precious they ; but also is

not he precious? Much, had not he spoken, would have been dumb; not dead, yet living voiceless.

On the whole, is it not an utterance, this mystic Song, at once of one of the greatest human souls, and of the highest thing that Europe had hitherto realised for itself? Christianity, as Dante sings it, is another than Paganism in the rude Norse mind; another than "Bastard Christianity" half-articulately spoken in the Arab Desert, seven-hundred years before!—The noblest *idea* made *real* hitherto among men, is sung, and emblemed-forth abidingly, by one of the noblest men. In the one sense and in the other, are we not right glad to possess it? As I calculate, it may last yet for long thousands of years. For the thing that is uttered from the inmost parts of a man's soul, differs altogether from what is uttered by the outer part. The outer is of the day, under the empire of mode; the outer passes away, in swift endless changes; the inmost is the same yesterday, today and forever. True souls, in all generations of the world, who look on this Dante, will find a brotherhood in him; the deep sincerity of his thoughts, his woes and hopes, will speak likewise to their sincerity; they will feel that this Dante too was a brother. Napoleon in Saint-Helena is charmed with the genial veracity of old Homer. The oldest Hebrew Prophet, under a vesture the most diverse from ours, does yet, because he speaks from the heart of man, speak to all men's hearts. It is the one sole secret of continuing long memorable. Dante, for depth of sincerity, is like an antique Prophet too; his words, like theirs, come from his very heart. One need not wonder if it were predicted that his Poem might be the most enduring thing our Europe has yet made; for nothing so endures as a truly spoken word. All cathedrals, pontificalities, brass and stone, and outer arrangement never so lasting, are brief in comparison to an unfathomable heart-song like this: one feels as if it might survive, still of importance to men, when these had all sunk into new irrecognisable combinations, and had ceased individually to be. Europe has made much;

great cities, great empires, encyclopædias, creeds, bodies of opinion and practice: but it has made little of the class of Dante's Thought. Homer yet *is*, veritably present face to face with every open soul of us; and Greece where is *it*? Desolate for thousands of years; away, vanished; a bewildered heap of stones and rubbish, the life and existence of it all gone. Like a dream; like the dust of King Agamemnon! Greece, except in the *words* it spoke, is not.

The uses of this Dante? We will not say much about his "uses." A human soul who has once got into that primal element of *Song*, and sung forth fitly somewhat therefrom, has worked in the *depths* of our existence; feeding through long times the life-roots of all excellent human things whatsoever,—in a way that "utilities" will not succeed well in calculating! We will not estimate the Sun by the quantity of gas-light it saves us; Dante shall be invaluable, or of no value. One remark I may make: the contrast in this respect between the Hero-Poet and the Hero-Prophet. In a hundred years, Mahomet, as we saw, had his Arabians at Grenada and at Delhi; Dante's Italians seem to be yet very much where they were. Shall we say, then, Dante's effect on the world was small in comparison? Not so: his arena is far more restricted; but also it is far nobler, clearer;—perhaps not less but more important. Mahomet speaks to great masses of men, in the coarse dialect adapted to such; a dialect filled with inconsistencies, crudities, follies: on the great masses alone can he act, and there with good and evil strangely blended. Dante speaks to the noble, the pure and great, in all times and places. Neither does he grow obsolete, as the other does. Dante burns as a pure star, fixed there in the firmament, at which the great and the high of all ages kindle themselves: he is the possession of all the chosen of the world for uncounted time. Dante, one calculates, may long survive Mahomet. In this way the balance may be made straight again. \* \* \*

As Dante, the Italian man, was sent into our world to embody musically the Religion of the Middle Ages, the Religion of our Modern Europe, its Inner Life; so Shakspeare, we may say, embodies for us the Outer Life of our Europe as developed then, its chivalries, courtesies, humours, ambitions, what practical way of thinking, acting, looking at the world, men then had. As in Homer we may still construe Old Greece; so in Shakspeare and Dante, after thousands of years, what our modern Europe was, in Faith and in Practice, will still be legible. Dante has given us the Faith or soul; Shakspeare, in a not less noble way, has given us the Practice or body. This latter also we were to have; a man was sent for it, the man Shakspeare. Just when that chivalry way of life had reached its last finish, and was on the point of breaking down into slow or swift dissolution, as we now see it everywhere, this other sovereign Poet, with his seeing eye, with his perennial singing voice, was sent to take note of it, to give long-enduring record of it. Two fit men: Dante, deep, fierce as the central fire of the world; Shakspeare, wide, placid, far-seeing, as the Sun, the upper light of the world. Italy produced the one world-voice; we English had the honour of producing the other.

Curious enough how, as it were by mere accident, this man came to us. I think always, so great, quiet, complete and self-sufficing is this Shakspeare, had the Warwickshire Squire not prosecuted him for deer-stealing, we had perhaps never heard of him as a Poet! The woods and skies, the rustic Life of Man in Stratford there, had been enough for this man! But indeed that strange outbudding of our whole English Existence, which we call the Elizabethan Era, did not it too come as of its own accord? The "Tree Igdrasil" buds and withers by its own laws,—too deep for our scanning. Yet it does bud and wither, and every bough and leaf of it is there, by fixed eternal laws; not a Sir Thomas Lucy but comes at the hour fit for him. Curious, I say, and not sufficiently considered: how everything does coöperate with all; not a leaf rotting on the highway

but is indissoluble portion of solar and stellar systems ; no thought, word or act of man but has sprung withal out of all men, and works sooner or later, recognisably or irrecognisably, on all men ! It is all a Tree : circulation of sap and influences, mutual communication of every minutest leaf with the lowest talon of a root, with every other greatest and minutest portion of the whole. The Tree Igdrasil, that has its roots down in the Kingdoms of Hela and Death, and whose boughs overspread the highest Heaven !—

In some sense it may be said that this glorious Elizabethan Era with its Shakspeare, as the outcome and flowerage of all which had preceded it, is itself attributable to the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. The Christian Faith, which was the theme of Dante's Song, had produced this Practical Life which Shakspeare was to sing. For Religion then, as it now and always is, was the soul of Practice ; the primary vital fact in men's life. And remark here, as rather curious, that Middle-Age Catholicism was abolished, so far as Acts of Parliament could abolish it, before Shakspeare, the noblest product of it, made his appearance. He did make his appearance nevertheless. Nature at her own time, with Catholicism or what else might be necessary, sent him forth ; taking small thought of Acts of Parliament. King-Henrys, Queen-Elizabeths go their way ; and Nature too goes hers. Acts of Parliament, on the whole, are small, notwithstanding the noise they make. What Act of Parliament, debate at St. Stephen's, on the hustings or elsewhere, was it that brought this Shakspeare into being ? No dining at Freemasons' Tavern, opening subscription-lists, selling of shares, and infinite other jangling and true or false endeavouring ! This Elizabethan Era, and all its nobleness and blessedness, came without proclamation, preparation of ours. Priceless Shakspeare was the free gift of Nature ; given altogether silently ;—received altogether silently, as if it had been a thing of little account. And yet, very literally, it is a priceless thing. One should look at that side of matters too.

Of this Shakspeare of ours, perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously expressed is, in fact, the right one ; I think the best judgment not of this country only, but of Europe at large, is slowly pointing to the conclusion, That Shakspeare is the chief of all Poets hitherto ; the greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left record of himself in the way of Literature. On the whole, I know not such a power of vision, such a faculty of thought, if we take all the characters of it, in any other man. Such a calmness of depth ; placid joyous strength ; all things imaged in that great soul of his so true and clear, as in a tranquil unfathomable sea ! It has been said, that in the constructing of Shakspeare's Dramas there is, apart from all other "faculties" as they are called, an understanding manifested, equal to that in Bacon's *Novum Organum*. That is true ; and it is not a truth that strikes every one. It would become more apparent if we tried, any of us for himself, how, out of Shakspeare's dramatic materials, *we* could fashion such a result ! The built house seems all so fit,—everyway as it should be, as if it came there by its own law and the nature of things,—we forget the rude disorderly quarry it was shaped from. The very perfection of the house, as if Nature herself had made it, hides the builder's merit. Perfect, more perfect than any other man, we may call Shakspeare in this : he discerns, knows as by instinct, what condition he works under, what his materials are, what his own force and its relation to them is. It is not a transitory glance of insight that will suffice ; it is deliberate illumination of the whole matter ; it is a calmly *seeing* eye ; a great intellect, in short. How a man, of some wide thing that he has witnessed, will construct a narrative, what kind of picture and delineation he will give of it,—is the best measure you could get of what intellect is in the man. Which circumstance is vital and shall stand prominent ; which unessential, fit to be suppressed ; where is the true *beginning*, the true sequence and ending ? To find out this, you task the whole force of insight that is in the man. He must *understand* the

thing; according to the depth of his understanding, will the fitness of his answer be. You will try him so. Does like join itself to like; does the spirit of method stir in that confusion, so that its embroilment becomes order? Can the man say, *Fiat lux*, Let there be light, and out of chaos make a world? Precisely as there is light in himself, will he accomplish this.

Or indeed we may say again, it is in what I called Portrait-painting, delineating of men and things, especially of men, that Shakspeare is great. All the greatness of the man comes out decisively here. It is unexampled, I think, that calm creative perspicacity of Shakspeare. The thing he looks at reveals not this or that face of it, but its inmost heart, and generic secret: it dissolves itself as in light before him, so that he discerns the perfect structure of it. Creative, we said: poetic creation, what is this too but *seeing* the thing sufficiently? The word that will describe the thing, follows of itself from such clear intense sight of the thing. And is not Shakspeare's *morality*, his valour, candour, tolerance, truthfulness; his whole victorious strength and greatness, which can triumph-over such obstructions, visible there too? Great as the world! No *twisted*, poor convex-concave mirror, reflecting all objects with its own convexities and concavities; a perfectly *level* mirror;—that is to say withal, if we will understand it, a man justly related to all things and men, a good man. It is truly a lordly spectacle how this great soul takes-in all kinds of men and objects, a Falstaff, an Othello, a Juliet, a Coriolanus; sets them all forth to us in their round completeness; loving, just, the equal brother of all. *Novum Organum*, and all the intellect you will find in Bacon, is of a quite secondary order; earthy, material, poor in comparison with this. Among modern men, one finds, in strictness, almost nothing of the same rank. Goethe alone, since the days of Shakspeare, reminds me of it. Of him too you say that he *saw* the object; you may say what he himself says of Shakspeare: "His characters are like watches with dial-plates of transparent crystal; they show you the hour

like others, and the inward mechanism also is all visible." \* \* \*

For, in fact, I say the degree of vision that dwells in a man is a correct measure of the man. If called to define Shakspeare's faculty, I should say superiority of Intellect, and think I had included all under that. What indeed are faculties? We talk of faculties as if they were distinct, things separable; as if a man had intellect, imagination, fancy, &c., as he has hands, feet and arms. That is a capital error. Then again, we hear of a man's "intellectual nature," and of his "moral nature," as if these again were divisible, and existed apart. Necessities of language do perhaps prescribe such forms of utterance; we must speak, I am aware, in that way, if we are to speak at all. But words ought not to harden into things for us. It seems to me, our apprehension of this matter is, for most part, radically falsified thereby. We ought to know withal, and to keep forever in mind, that these divisions are at bottom but *names*; that man's spiritual nature, the vital Force which dwells in him, is essentially one and indivisible; that what we call imagination, fancy, understanding, and so forth, are but different figures of the same Power of Insight, all indissolubly connected with each other, physiognomically related; that if we knew one of them, we might know all of them. Morality itself, what we call the moral quality of a man, what is this but another *side* of the one vital Force whereby he is and works? All that a man does is physiognomical of him. You may see how a man would fight, by the way in which he sings; his courage, or want of courage, is visible in the word he utters, in the opinion he has formed, no less than in the stroke he strikes. He is *one*; and preaches the same Self abroad in all these ways. \* \* \*

Withal the joyful tranquillity of this man is notable. I will not blame Dante for his misery: it is as battle without victory; but true battle,—the first, indispensable thing. Yet I call Shakspeare greater than Dante, in that he fought truly, and did conquer. Doubt it not,

he had his own sorrows : those *Sonnets* of his will even testify expressly in what deep waters he had waded, and swum struggling for his life ;—as what man like him ever failed to have to do ? It seems to me a heedless notion, our common one, that he sat like a bird on the bough ; and sang forth, free and offhand, never knowing the troubles of other men. Not so ; with no man is it so. How could a man travel forward from rustic deer-poaching to such tragedy-writing, and not fall-in with sorrows by the way ? Or, still better, how could a man delineate a Hamlet, a Coriolanus, a Macbeth, so many suffering heroic hearts, if his own heroic heart had never suffered ?—And now, in contrast with all this, observe his mirthfulness, his genuine overflowing love of laughter ! You would say, in no point does he *exaggerate* but only in laughter. Fiery objurgations, words that pierce and burn, are to be found in Shakspeare ; yet he is always in measure here ; never what Johnson would remark as a specially “good hater.” But his laughter seems to pour from him in floods ; he heaps all manner of ridiculous nicknames on the butt he is bantering, tumbles and tosses him in all sorts of horse-play ; you would say, roars and laughs. And then, if not always the finest, it is always a genial laughter. Not at mere weakness, at misery or poverty ; never. No man who *can* laugh, what we call laughing, will laugh at these things. It is some poor character only *desiring* to laugh, and have the credit of wit, that does so. Laughter means sympathy ; good laughter is not “the crackling of thorns under the pot.” Even at stupidity and pretension this Shakspeare does not laugh otherwise than genially. Dogberry and Verges tickle our very hearts ; and we dismiss them covered with explosions of laughter : but we like the poor fellows only the better for our laughing ; and hope they will get on well there, and continue Presidents of the City-watch.—Such laughter, like sunshine on the deep sea, is very beautiful to me. \* \* \*

But I will say, of Shakspeare’s works generally, that we have no full impress of him there ; even as

full as we have of many men. His works are so many windows, through which we see a glimpse of the world that was in him. All his works seem, comparatively speaking, cursory, imperfect, written under cramping circumstances ; giving only here and there a note of the full utterance of the man. Passages there are that come upon you like splendour out of Heaven ; bursts of radiance, illuminating the very heart of the thing : you say, "That is *true*, spoken once and forever ; wheresoever and whensoever there is an open human soul, that will be recognised as true !" Such bursts, however, make us feel that the surrounding matter is not radiant ; that it is, in part, temporary, conventional. Alas, Shakspeare had to write for the Globe Playhouse : his great soul had to crush itself, as it could, into that and no other mould. It was with him, then, as it is with us all. No man works save under conditions. The sculptor cannot set his own free Thought before us, but his Thought as he could translate it into the stone that was given, with the tools that were given. *Disjecta membra* are all that we find of any Poet, or of any man.

Whoever looks intelligently at this Shakspeare may recognise that he too was a *Prophet*, in his way ; of an insight analogous to the Prophetic, though he took it up in another strain. Nature seemed to this man also divine ; *unspeakable*, deep as Tophet, high as Heaven : "We are such stuff as Dreams are made of !" That scroll in Westminster Abby, which few read with understanding, is of the depth of any seer. But the man sang ; did not preach, except musically. We called Dante the melodious Priest of Middle-Age Catholicism. May we not call Shakspeare the still more melodious Priest of a *true* Catholicism, the "Universal Church" of the Future and of all times ? No narrow superstition, harsh asceticism, intolerance, fanatical fierceness or perversion : a Revelation, so far as it goes, that such a thousandfold hidden beauty and divineness dwells in all Nature ; which let all men worship as they can ! We

may say without offence, that there rises a kind of universal Psalm out of this Shakspeare too ; not unfit to make itself heard among the still more sacred Psalms. Not in disharmony with these, if we understood them, but in harmony !—I cannot call this Shakspeare a “Sceptic,” as some do ; his indifference to the creeds and theological quarrels of his time misleading them. No : neither unpatriotic, though he says little about his Patriotism ; nor sceptic, though he says little about his Faith. Such “indifference” was the fruit of his greatness withal : his whole heart was in his own grand sphere of worship (we may call it such) ; these other controversies, vitally important to other men, were not vital to him. \* \* \*

Well : this is our poor Warwickshire Peasant, who rose to be Manager of a Playhouse, so that he could live without begging ; whom the Earl of Southampton cast some kind glances on ; whom Sir Thomas Lucy, many thanks to him, was for sending to the Treadmill ! We did not account him a god, like Odin, while he dwelt with us ;—on which point there were much to be said. But I will say rather, or repeat : In spite of the sad state Hero-worship now lies in, consider what this Shakspeare has actually become among us. Which Englishman we ever made, in this land of ours, which million of Englishmen, would we not give-up rather than the Stratford Peasant ? There is no regiment of highest Dignitaries that we would sell him for. He is the grandest thing we have yet done. For our honour among foreign nations, as an ornament to our English Household, what item is there that we would not surrender rather than him ? Consider now, if they asked us, Will you give-up your Indian Empire or your Shakspeare, you English ; never have had any Indian Empire, or never have had any Shakspeare ? Really it were a grave question. Official persons would answer doubtless in official language ; but we, for our part too, should not we be forced to answer : Indian Empire, or no Indian Empire ; we cannot do without Shakspeare !

Indian Empire will go, at any rate, some day ; but this Shakspeare does not go, he lasts forever with us ; we cannot give-up our Shakspeare !

Nay, apart from spiritualities ; and considering him merely as a real, marketable, tangibly-useful possession. England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English : in America, in new Holland, east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the Globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall-out and fight, but live at peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another ? This is justly regarded as the greatest practical problem, the thing all manner of sovereignties and governments are here to accomplish : what is it that will accomplish this ? Acts of Parliament, administrative prime-ministers cannot. America is parted from us, so far as Parliament could part it. Call it not fantastic, for there is much reality in it : Here, I say, is an English King, whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments, can dethrone ! This King Shakspeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying-signs ; *indestructible* ; really more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever ? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen, a thousand years hence. From Paramatta, from New York, wheresoever, under what sort of Parish-Constable soever, English men and women are, they will say to one another : "Yes, this Shakspeare is ours ; we produced him, we speak and think by him ; we are of one blood and kind with him." The most common-sense politician, too, if he pleases, may think of that.

Yes, truly, it is a great thing for a Nation that it get an articulate voice ; that it produce a man who will speak-forth melodiously what the heart of it means ! Italy, for example, poor Italy lies dismembered, scattered asunder, not appearing in any protocol or treaty

as a unity at all ; yet the noble Italy is actually *one* : Italy produced its Dante ; Italy can speak ! The Czar of all the Russias, he is strong, with so many bayonets, Cos-sacks and cannons ; and does a great seat in keeping such a tract of Earth politically together ; but he cannot yet speak. Something great in him, but it is a dumb greatness. He has had no voice of genius, to be heard of all men and times. He must learn to speak. He is a great dumb monster hitherto. His cannons and Cos-sacks will all have rusted into nonentity, while that Dante's voice is still audible. The Nation that has a Dante is bound together as no dumb Russia can be.—We must here end what we had to say of the *Hero-Poet*.

## II

### THE HERO AS MAN OF LETTERS : JOHNSON (FROM LECTURE V)

As for Johnson, I have always considered him to be, by nature, one of our great English souls. A strong and noble man ; so much left undeveloped in him to the last : in a kindlier element what might he not have been, —Poet, Priest, sovereign Ruler ! On the whole, a man must not complain of his "element," of his "time," or the like ; it is thrifless work doing so. His time is bad : well then, he is there to make it better !—Johnson's youth was poor, isolated, hopeless, very miserable. Indeed, it does not seem possible that, in any the favourablest outward circumstances, Johnson's life could have been other than a painful one. The world might have had more of profitable *work* out of him, or less ; but his *effort* against the world's work could never have been a light one. Nature, in return for his nobleness, had said to him, Live in an element of diseased sorrow. Nay, perhaps the sorrow and the nobleness were intimately and even inseparably connected with each other. At all events, poor Johnson had to go about girt with continual hypochondria, physical and spiritual pain. Like a Hercules with the burning Nessus'-shirt on him,

which shoots-in on him dull incurable misery : the Nessus'-shirt not to be stript-off, which is his own natural skin ! In this manner *he* had to live. Figure him there, with his scrofulous diseases, with his great greedy heart, and unspeakable chaos of thoughts ; stalking mournful as a stranger in this Earth ; eagerly devouring what spiritual thing he could come at : school-languages and other merely grammatical stuff, if there were nothing better ! The largest soul that was in all England ; and provision made for it of “ fourpence-halfpenny a day.” Yet a giant invincible soul ; a true man’s. One remembers always that story of the shoes at Oxford : the rough, seamy-faced, rawboned College Servitor stalking about, in winter-season, with his shoes worn-out ; how the charitable Gentleman Commoner secretly places a new pair at his door ; and the rawboned Servitor, lifting them, looking at them near, with his dim eyes, with what thoughts,—pitches them out of window ! Wet feet, mud, frost, hunger or what you will ; but not beggary : we cannot stand beggary ! Rude stubborn self-help here ; a whole world of squalor, rudeness, confused misery and want, yet of nobleness and manfulness withal. It is a type of the man’s life, this pitching-away of the shoes. An original man ;—not a second-hand, borrowing or begging man. Let us stand on our own basis, at any rate ! On such shoes as we ourselves can get. On frost and mud, if you will, but honestly on that ;—on the reality and substance which Nature gives *us*, not on the semblance, on the thing she has given another than us !—

And yet with all this rugged pride of manhood and self-help, was there ever soul more tenderly affectionate, loyally submissive to what was really higher than he ? Great souls are always loyally submissive, reverent to what is over them ; only small mean souls are otherwise. I could not find a better proof of what I said the other day, That the sincere man was by nature the obedient man ; that only in a World of Heroes was there loyal Obedience to the Heroic. The essence of *originality* is not that it be *new* : Johnson believed altogether in the

old ; he found the old opinions credible for him, fit for him ; and in a right heroic manner lived under them. He is well worth study in regard to that. For we are to say that Johnson was far other than a mere man of words and formulas ; he was a man of truths and facts. He stood by the old formulas ; the happier was it for him that he could so stand : but in all formulas that *he* could stand by, there needed to be a most genuine substance. Very curious how, in that poor Paper-age, so barren, artificial, thick-quilted with Pedantries, Hearsays, the great Fact of this Universe glared in forever, wonderful, indubitable, unspeakable, divine-infernal, upon this man too ! How he harmonised his Formulas with it, how he managed at all under such circumstances : that is a thing worth seeing. A thing “to be looked at with reverence, with pity, with awe.” That Church of St. Clement Danes, where Johnson still *worshipped* in the era of Voltaire, is to me a venerable place.

It was in virtue of his *sincerity*, of his speaking still in some sort from the heart of Nature, though in the current artificial dialect, that Johnson was a Prophet. Are not all dialects “artificial”? Artificial things are not all false ;—nay every true Product of Nature will infallibly *shape* itself ; we may say all artificial things are, at the starting of them, *true*. What we call “Formulas” are not in their origin bad ; they are indispensably good. Formula is *method*, *habitude* ; found wherever man is found. Formulas fashion themselves as Paths do, as beaten Highways, leading towards some sacred or high object, whither many men are bent. Consider it. One man, full of heartfelt earnest impulse, finds out a way of doing somewhat,—were it of uttering his soul’s reverence for the Highest, were it but of fitly saluting his fellow-man. An inventor was needed to do that, a *poet* ; he has articulated the dim-struggling thought that dwelt in his own and many hearts. This is his way of doing that ; these are his footsteps, the beginning of a “Path.” And now see : the second man travels naturally in the footsteps of his foregoer, it

is the *easiest* method. In the footsteps of his foregoer ; yet with improvements, with changes where such seem good ; at all events with enlargements, the Path ever *widening* itself as more travel it ;—till at last there is a broad Highway whereon the whole world may travel and drive. While there remains a City or Shrine, or any Reality to drive to, at the farther end, the Highway shall be right welcome ! When the City is gone, we will forsake the Highway. In this manner all Institutions, Practices, Regulated Things in the world have come into existence, and gone out of existence. Formulas all begin by being *full* of substance ; you may call them the *skin*, the articulation into shape, into limbs and skin, of a substance that is already there : *they* had not been there otherwise. Idols, as we said, are not idolatrous till they become doubtful, empty for the worshipper's heart. Much as we talk against Formulas, I hope no one of us is ignorant withal of the high significance of *true* Formulas ; that they were, and will ever be, the indispensablest furniture of our habitation in this world.— —

Mark, too, how little Johnson boasts of his “sincerity.” He has no suspicion of his being particularly sincere,—of his being particularly anything ! A hard-struggling, weary-hearted man, or “scholar” as he calls himself, trying hard to get some honest livelihood in the world, not to starve, but to live—without stealing ! A noble unconsciousness is in him. He does not “engrave *Truth* on his watch-seal ;” no, but he stands by truth, speaks by it, works and lives by it. Thus it ever is. Think of it once more. The man whom Nature has appointed to do great things is, first of all, furnished with that openness to Nature which renders him incapable of being *insincere* ! To his large, open, deep-feeling heart Nature is a Fact : all hearsay is hearsay ; the unspeakable greatness of this Mystery of Life, let him acknowledge it or not, nay even though he seem to forget it or deny it, is ever present to *him*,—fearful and wonderful, on this hand and on that. He has a basis of sincerity, unrecognised, because never questioned or capable of

question. Mirabeau, Mahomet, Cromwell, Napoleon : all the Great Men I ever heard-of have this as the primary material of them. Innumerable commonplace men are debating, are talking everywhere their commonplace doctrines, which they have learned by logic, by rote, at secondhand : to that kind of man all this is still nothing. He must have truth ; truth which *he* feels to be true. How shall he stand otherwise ? His whole soul, at all moments, in all ways, tells him that there is no standing. He is under the noble necessity of being true. Johnson's way of thinking about this world is not mine, any more than Mahomet's was : but I recognise the everlasting element of heart-sincerity in both ; and see with pleasure how neither of them remains ineffectual. Neither of them is as *chaff* sown ; in both of them is something which the seed-field will *grow*.

Johnson was a Prophet to his people ; preached a Gospel to them,—as all like him always do. The highest Gospel he preached we may describe as a kind of Moral Prudence : "in a world where much is to be done and little is to be known," see how you will *do* it ! A thing well worth preaching. "A world where much is to be done and little is to be known :" do not sink yourselves in boundless bottomless abysses of Doubt, of wretched godforgetting Unbelief ;—you were miserable then, powerless, mad : how could you *do* or work at all ? Such Gospel Johnson preached and taught ;—coupled, theoretically and practically, with this other great Gospel, "Clear your mind of Cant !" Have no trade with Cant : stand on the cold mud in the frosty weather, but let it be in your own *real* torn shoes : "that will be better for you," as Mahomet says ! I call this, I call these two things *joined together*, a great Gospel, the greatest perhaps that was possible at that time.

Johnson's Writings, which once had such currency and celebrity, are now as it were disowned by the young generation. It is not wonderful ; Johnson's opinions are fast becoming obsolete : but his style of thinking and of living, we may hope, will never become obsolete. I find in Johnson's Books the indisputablest traces of a

great intellect and great heart ;—ever welcome, under what obstructions and perversions soever. They are *sincere* words, those of his ; he means things by them. A wondrous buckram style,—the best he could get to then ; a measured grandiloquence, stepping or rather stalking along in a very solemn way, grown obsolete now ; sometimes a tumid *size* of phraseology not in proportion to the contents of it : all this you will put-up with. For the phraseology, tumid or not, has always *something within it*. So many beautiful styles, and books, with *nothing* in them ;—a man is a *malefactor* to the world who writes such ! *They* are the avoidable kind !—Had Johnson left nothing but his *Dictionary*, one might have traced there a great intellect, a genuine man. Looking to its clearness of definition, its general solidity, honesty, insight and successful method, it may be called the best of all Dictionaries. There is in it a kind of architectural nobleness ; it stands there like a great solid square-built edifice, finished, symmetrically complete : you judge that a true Builder did it.

## PAST AND PRESENT

[The years 1842 and 1843 were among the most disturbed in the English domestic history of the nineteenth century. The Chartist movement was at its height, the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws had roused the country, and in Ireland the Young Ireland party of Davis and Gavan Duffy was beginning.

Carlyle, who was now engaged upon *Cromwell*, gave much thought to the state of the working classes, "the Condition of England Question," as he called it, and, happening to read the "Chronicle" of Joceline of Brakelonde, a twelfth-century monk of St. Edmundsbury, he felt impelled to write. *Past and Present* was produced in the first seven weeks of 1843 without any of the effort and mental conflict that accompanied the birth of Carlyle's other works. It contrasts the England of the twelfth-century with that of the middle of the nineteenth and suggests remedies for the evils that then threatened a revolution. As a volume of historical etchings it is incomparable. But the want of a clear connection between the "Past" and the "Present" injures the book's artistic unity. Whatever view be taken of the specific methods by which Carlyle hoped to cure social diseases, no one can dispute the vigour and plainness with which he stated the problem. Lockhart wrote "that it had made him conscious of life and feeling as he had never been before," and thousands have had the same experience since.]

### I

#### THE SPHINX-QUESTION

(FROM BOOK I, CHAPTER III)

AND truly this first practical form of the Sphinx-question, inarticulately and so audibly put there, is one of the most impressive ever asked in the world. "Behold us here, so many thousands, millions, and increasing at the rate of fifty every hour. We are right willing and able to work; and on the Planet Earth is plenty of work and wages for a million times as many. We ask, If you mean to lead us towards work; to try to lead us,—

by ways new, never yet heard of till this new unheard-of Time? Or if you declare that you cannot lead us? And expect that we are to remain quietly unled, and in a composed manner perish of starvation? What is it you expect of us? What is it you mean to do with us?" This question, I say, has been put in the hearing of all Britain; and will be again put, and ever again, till some answer be given it.

Unhappy Workers, unhappier Idlers, unhappy men and women of this actual England. We are yet very far from an answer, and there will be no existence for us without finding one. "A fair day's-wages for a fair day's-work :" it is as just a demand as Governed men ever made of Governing. It is the everlasting right of man. Indisputable as Gospels, as arithmetical multiplication-tables : it must and will have itself fulfilled ;—and yet, in these times of ours, with what enormous difficulty, next-door to impossibility ! For the times are really strange ; of a complexity intricate with all the new width of the ever-widening world ; times here of half-frantic velocity of impetus, there of the deadest-looking stillness and paralysis ; times definable as showing two qualities, Dilettantism and Mammonism ;—most intricate obstructed times ! Nay, if there were not a Heaven's radiance of Justice, prophetic, clearly of Heaven, discernible behind all these confused world-wide entanglements, of Landlord interests, Manufacturing interests, Tory-Whig interests, and who knows what other interests, expediencies, vested interests, established possessions, inveterate Dilettantisms, Midas-eared Mammonisms,—it would seem to every one a flat impossibility, which all wise men might as well at once abandon. If you do not know eternal Justice from momentary Expediency, and understand in your heart of hearts how Justice, radiant, beneficent, as the all-victorious Light-element, is also in essence, if need be, an all-victorious *Fire*-element, and melts all manner of vested interests, and the hardest iron cannon, as if they were soft wax, and does ever in the long-run rule and reign, and allows nothing else to rule and reign,

—you also would talk of impossibility ! But it is only difficult, it is not impossible. Possible ? It is, with whatever difficulty, very clearly inevitable.

Fair day's-wages for fair day's-work ! exclaims a sarcastic man : Alas, in what corner of this Planet, since Adam first awoke on it, was that ever realised ? The day's-wages of John Milton's day's-work, named *Paradise Lost* and *Milton's Works*, were Ten Pounds paid by instalments, and a rather close escape from death on the gallows. Consider that : it is no rhetorical flourish ; it is an authentic, altogether quiet fact,—emblematic quietly documentary of a whole world of such, ever since human history began. Oliver Cromwell quitted his farming ; undertook a Hercules' Labour and lifelong wrestle with that Lernean Hydra coil, wide as England, hissing heaven-high through its thousand crowned, coroneted, shovel-hatted quack-heads ; and he did wrestle with it, the truest and terriblest wrestle I have heard of ; and he wrestled it, and mowed and cut it down a good many stages, so that its hissing is ever since pitiful in comparison, and one can walk abroad in comparative peace from it ;—and his wages, as I understand, were burial under the gallows-tree near Tyburn Turnpike, with his head on the gable of Westminster Hall, and two centuries now of mixed cursing and ridicule from all manner of men. His dust lies under the Edgware Road, near Tyburn Turnpike, at this hour ; and his memory is—Nay, what matters what his memory is ? His memory, at bottom, is or yet shall be as that of a god : a terror and horror to all quacks and cowards and insincere persons ; an everlasting encouragement, new memento, battleword, and pledge of victory to all the brave. It is the natural course and history of the Godlike, in every place, in every time. What god ever carried it with the Tenpound Franchisers ; in Open Vestry, or with any Sanhedrim of considerable standing ? When was a god found "agreeable" to everybody ? The regular way is to hang, kill, crucify your gods, and execrate and

trample them under your stupid hoofs for a century or two ; till you discover that they are gods,—and then take to braying over them, still in a very long-eared manner !—So speaks the sarcastic man ; in his wild way, very mournful truths.

Day's-wages for day's-work ? continues he : The Progress of Human Society consists even in this same. The better and better apportioning of wages to work. Give me this, you have given me all. Pay to every man accurately what he has worked for, what he has earned and done and deserved,—to this man broad lands and honours, to that man high gibbets and treadmills : what more have I to ask ? Heaven's Kingdom, which we daily pray for, *has* come ; God's will is done on Earth even as it is in Heaven ! This *is* the radiance of celestial Justice ; in the light or in the fire of which all impediments, vested interests, and iron cannon, are more and more melting like wax, and disappearing from the pathways of men. A thing ever struggling forward ; irrepressible, advancing inevitable ; perfecting itself, all days, more and more,—never to be *perfect* till that general Doomsday, the ultimate Consummation, and Last of earthly Days.

True, as to “perfection” and so forth, answer we ; true enough ! And yet withal we have to remark, that imperfect Human Society holds itself together, and finds place under the Sun, in virtue simply of some *approximation* to perfection being actually made and put in practice. We remark farther, that there are supportable approximations, and then likewise insupportable. With some, almost with any, supportable approximation men are apt, perhaps too apt, to rest indolently patient, and say, It will do. Thus these poor Manchester manual workers mean only, by day's-wages for day's-work, certain coins of money adequate to keep them living ;—in return for their work, such modicum of food, clothes and fuel as will enable them to continue their work itself ! They as yet clamour for no more ; the rest, still inarticulate, cannot yet shape itself into a demand at all, and only lies in them as a dumb wish ; perhaps

only, still more inarticulate, as a dumb, altogether unconscious want. *This* is the supportable approximation they would rest patient with, That by their work they might be kept alive to work more!—*This* once grown unattainable, I think your approximation may consider itself to have reached the *insupportable* stage; and may prepare, with whatever difficulty, reluctance and astonishment, for one of two things, for changing or perishing!

## II

## THE ELECTION OF A MEDIEVAL ABBOT

(FROM BOOK II, CHAPTER VIII)

ACCORDINGLY our Prior assembles us in Chapter; and, we adjuring him before God to do justly, nominates, not by our selection, yet with our assent, Twelve Monks, moderately satisfactory. Of whom are Hugo Third-Prior, Brother Dennis a venerable man, Walter the *Medicus*, Samson *Subsacrista*, and other esteemed characters,—though Willelmus *Sacrista*, of the red nose, too is one. These shall proceed straightway to Waltham; and there elect the Abbot as they may and can. Monks are sworn to obedience; must not speak too loud, under penalty of foot-gyves, limbo, and bread and water: yet monks too would know what it is they are obeying. The St. Edmundsbury Community has no hustings, ballot-box, indeed no open voting: yet by various vague manipulations, pulse-feelings, we struggle to ascertain what its virtual aim is, and succeed better or worse.

This question, however, rises; alas, a quite preliminary question: Will the *Dominus Rex* allow us to choose freely? It is to be hoped! Well, if so, we agree to choose one of our own Convent. If not, if the *Dominus Rex* will force a stranger on us, we decide on demurring, the Prior and his Twelve shall demur: we can appeal, plead, remonstrate; appeal even to the

Pope, but trust it will not be necessary. Then there is this other question, raised by Brother Samson: What if the Thirteen should not themselves be able to agree? Brother Samson *Subsacrista*, one remarks, is ready oftenest with some question, some suggestion, that has wisdom in it. Though a servant of servants, and saying little, his words all tell, having sense in them; it seems by his light mainly that we steer ourselves in this great dimness.

What if the Thirteen should not themselves be able to agree? Speak, Samson, and advise.—Could not, hints Samson, Six of our venerablest elders be chosen by us, a kind of electoral committee, here and now: of these, “with their hand on the Gospels, with their eye on the *Sacrosancta*,” we take oath that they will do faithfully; let these, in secret and as before God, agree on Three whom they reckon fittest; write their names in a Paper, and deliver the same sealed, forthwith, to the Thirteen: one of those Three the Thirteen shall fix on, if permitted. If not permitted, that is to say, if the *Dominus Rex* force us to demur,—the Paper shall be brought back unopened, and publicly burned, that no man’s secret bring him into trouble.

So Samson advises, so we act; wisely, in this and in other crises of the business. Our electoral committee, its eye on the *Sacrosancta*, is soon named, soon sworn; and we, striking-up the Fifth Psalm, “*Verba mea*,

Give ear unto my words, O Lord,  
My meditation weigh,”

march out chanting, and leave the Six to their work in the Chapter here. Their work, before long, they announce as finished: they, with their eye on the *Sacrosancta*, imprecating the Lord to weigh and witness their meditation, have fixed on Three Names, and written them in this Sealed Paper. Let Samson *Subsacrista*, general servant of the party, take charge of it. On the morrow morning, our Prior and his Twelve will be ready to get under way.

This, then, is the ballot-box and electoral winnowing-machine they have at St. Edmundsbury: a mind fixed on the Thrice Holy, an appeal to God on high to witness their meditation: by far the best, and indeed the only good electoral winnowing-machine,—if men have souls in them. Totally worthless, it is true, and even hideous and poisonous, if men have no souls. But without soul, alas, what winnowing-machine in human elections can be of avail? We cannot get along without soul; we stick fast, the mournsulest spectacle; and salt itself will not save us!

On the morrow morning, accordingly, our Thirteen set forth; or rather our Prior and Eleven; for Samson, as general servant of the party, has to linger, settling many things. At length he too gets upon the road; and, "carrying the sealed Paper in a leather pouch hung round his neck; and *froccum bajulans in ulnis*" (thanks to thee, Bozzy Jocelin), "his frock-skirts looped over his elbow," showing substantial stern-works, tramps stoutly along. Away across the Heath, not yet of Newmarket and horse-jockeying; across your Fleam-dike and Devil's-dike, no longer useful as a Mercian East-Anglian boundary or bulwark: continually towards Waltham, and the Bishop of Winchester's House there, for his Majesty is in that. Brother Samson, as purse-bearer, has the reckoning always, when there is one, to pay; "delays are numerous," progress none of the swiftest.

But, in the solitude of the Convent, Destiny thus big and in her birthtime, what gossiping, what babbling, what dreaming of dreams! The secret of the Three our electoral elders alone know: some Abbot we shall have to govern us; but which Abbot, oh, which! One Monk discerns in a vision of the night-watches, that we shall get an Abbot of our own body, without needing to demur: a prophet appeared to him clad all in white, and said, "Ye shall have one of yours, and he will rage among you like a wolf, *scvit ut lupus*." Verily!—then which of ours? Another Monk now dreams: he has

seen clearly which : a certain Figure taller by head and shoulders than the other two, dressed in alb and *pallium*, and with the attitude of one about to fight ;—which tall Figure a wise Editor would rather not name at this stage of the business ! Enough that the vision is true : that Saint Edmund himself, pale and awful, seemed to rise from his Shrine, with naked feet, and say audibly, “He, *ille*, shall veil my feet ;” which part of the vision also proves true. Such guessing, visioning, dim perscrutation of the momentous future : the very cloth-makers, old women, all townsfolk speak of it, “and more than once it is reported in St. Edmundsbury, This one is elected ; and then, This one, and That other.” Who knows ?

But now, sure enough, at Waltham “on the second Sunday of Quadragesima,” which Dryasdust declares to mean the 22d day of February, year 1182, Thirteen St. Edmundsbury Monks are, at last, seen processioning towards the Winchester Manorhouse ; and, in some high Presence-chamber and Hall of State, get access to Henry II. in all his glory. What a Hall,—not imaginary in the least, but entirely real and indisputable, though so extremely dim to us ; sunk in the deep distances of Night ! The Winchester Manorhouse has fled bodily, like a Dream of the old Night ; not Dryasdust himself can show a wreck of it. House and people, royal and episcopal, lords and varlets, where are they ? Why *there*, I say, Seven Centuries off ; sunk *so* far in the Night, there they *are* ; peep through the blankets of the old Night, and thou wilt see ! King Henry himself is visibly there ; a vivid, noble-looking man, with grizzled beard, in glittering uncertain costume ; with earls round him, and bishops, and dignitaries, in the like. The Hall is large, and has for one thing an altar near it,—chapel and altar adjoining it ; but what gilt seats, carved tables, carpeting of rush-cloth, what arras-hangings, and huge fire of logs :—alas, it has Human Life in it ; and is not that the grand miracle, in what hangings or costume soever ?—

The *Dominus Rex*, benignantly receiving our Thirteen with their obeisance, and graciously declaring that he will strive to act for God's honour and the Church's good, commands, "by the Bishop of Winchester and Geoffrey the Chancellor,"—*Galfridus Cancellarius*, Henry's and the Fair Rosamond's authentic Son present here!—commands, "That they, the said Thirteen, do now withdraw, and fix upon Three from their own Monastery." A work soon done; the Three hanging ready round Samson's neck, in that leather pouch of his. Breaking the seal, we find the names,—what think ye of it, ye higher dignitaries, thou indolent Prior, thou *Willelmus Sacrista* with the red bottle-nose?—the names, in this order: of Samson *Subsacrista*, of Roger the distressed Cellarer, of Hugo *Tertius-Prior*.

The higher dignitaries, all omitted here, "flush suddenly red in the face;" but have nothing to say. One curious fact and question certainly is, How Hugo Third-Prior, who was of the electoral committee, came to nominate *himself* as one of the Three? A curious fact, which Hugo Third-Prior has never yet entirely explained, that I know of!—However, we return, and report to the King our Three names; merely altering the order; putting Samson last, as lowest of all. The King, at recitation of our Three, asks us: "Who are they? Were they born in my domain? Totally unknown to me! You must nominate three others." Whereupon *Willelmus Sacrista* says, "Our Prior must be named, *quia caput nostrum est*, being already our head." And the Prior responds, "*Willelmus Sacrista* is a fit man, *bonus vir est*,"—for all his red nose. Tickle me, Toby, and I'll tickle thee! Venerable Dennis too is named; none in his conscience can say nay. There are now Six on our List. "Well," said the King, "they have done it swiftly, they! *Deus est cum eis*." The Monks withdraw again; and Majesty revolves, for a little, with his *Pares* and *Episcopi*, Lords or "*Law-wards*" and Soul-Overseers, the thoughts of the royal breast. The Monks wait silent in an outer room.

In short while, they are next ordered, To add yet another three; but not from their own Convent; from other Convents, "for the honour of my kingdom." Here,—what is to be done here? We will demur, if need be! We do name three, however, for the nonce: the Prior of St. Faith's, a good Monk of St. Neot's, a good Monk of St. Alban's; good men all; all made abbots and dignitaries since, at this hour. There are now Nine upon our List. What the thoughts of the Dominus Rex may be farther? The Dominus Rex, thanking graciously, sends out word that we shall now strike off three. The three strangers are instantly struck off. Willelmus Sacrista adds, that he will of his own accord decline,—a touch of grace and respect for the *Sacrosanta*, even in Willelmus! The King then orders us to strike off a couple more; then yet one more: Hugo Third-Prior goes, and Roger *Cellarius*, and venerable Monk Dennis;—and now there remain on our List two only, Samson Subsacrista and the Prior.

Which of these two? It were hard to say,—by Monks who may get themselves foot-gyved and thrown into limbo for speaking! We humbly request that the Bishop of Winchester and Geoffrey the Chancellor may again enter, and help us to decide. "Which do you want?" asks the Bishop. Venerable Dennis made a speech, "commending the persons of the Prior and Samson; but always in the corner of his discourse, *in angulo sui sermonis*, brought Samson in." "I see!" said the Bishop: "We are to understand that your Prior is somewhat remiss; that you want to have him you call Samson for Abbot." "Either of them is good," said venerable Dennis, almost trembling; "but we would have the better, if it pleased God." "Which of the two *do* you want?" inquires the Bishop pointedly. "Samson!" answered Dennis; "Samson!" echoed all of the rest that durst speak or echo anything: and Samson is reported to the King accordingly. His Majesty, advising of it for a moment, orders that Samson be brought in with the other Twelve.

The King's Majesty, looking at us somewhat sternly, then says: "You present to me Samson; I do not know him: had it been your Prior, whom I do know, I should have accepted him: however, I will now do as you wish. But have a care of yourselves. By the true eyes of God, *per veros oculos Dei*, if you manage badly, I will be upon you!" Samson, therefore, steps forward, kisses the King's feet; but swiftly rises erect again, swiftly turns towards the altar, uplifting with the other Twelve, in clear tenor-note, the Fifty-first Psalm, "*Miserere mei Deus*,

After thy loving-kindness, Lord,  
Have mercy upon me;"

with firm voice, firm step and head, no change in his countenance whatever. "By God's eyes," said the King, "that one, I think, will govern the Abbey well." By the same oath (charged to your Majesty's account), I too am precisely of that opinion! It is some while since I fell in with a likelier man anywhere than this new Abbot Samson. Long life to him, and may the Lord *have* mercy on him as Abbot!

Thus, then, have the St. Edmundsbury Monks, without express ballot-box or other good winnowing-machine, contrived to accomplish the most important social feat a body of men can do, to winnow out the man that is to govern them: and truly one sees not that, by any winnowing-machine whatever, they could have done it better. O ye kind Heavens, there is in every Nation and Community *a fittest*, a wisest, bravest, best; whom could we find and make King over us, all were in very truth well;—the best that God and Nature had permitted *us* to make it! By what art discover him? Will the Heavens in their pity teach us no art; for our need of him is great!

## III

## LABOUR AND REWARD

(FROM BOOK III, CHAPTERS XI AND XII)

FOR there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in Idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so Mammonish, mean, is in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.

The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it. "Know thyself :" long enough has that poor "self" of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to "know" it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it, like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.

It has been written, "an endless significance lies in Work;" a man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seedfields rise instead, and stately cities; and withal the man himself first ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby. Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labour, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like helldogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor dayworker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valour against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labour in him, is it not as purifying fire, wherein all poison is burnt up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame!

Destiny, on the whole, has no other way of cultivating

us. A formless Chaos, once set it *revolving*, grows round and ever rounder ; ranges itself, by mere force of gravity, into strata, spherical courses ; is no longer a Chaos, but a round compacted World. What would become of the Earth, did she cease to revolve ? In the poor old Earth, so long as she revolves, all inequalities, irregularities disperse themselves ; all irregularities are incessantly becoming regular. Hast thou looked on the Potter's wheel,—one of the venerablest objects ; old as the Prophet Ezechiel and far older ? Rude lumps of clay, how they spin themselves up, by mere quick whirling, into beautiful circular dishes. And fancy the most assiduous Potter, but without his wheel ; reduced to make dishes, or rather amorphous botches, by mere kneading and baking ! Even such a Potter were Destiny, with a human soul that would rest and lie at ease, that would not work and spin ! Of an idle unrevolving man the kindest Destiny, like the most assiduous Potter without wheel, can bake and knead nothing other than a botch ; let her spend on him what expensive colouring, what gilding and enamelling she will, he is but a botch. Not a dish ; no, a bulging, kneaded, crooked, shambling, squint-cornered, amorphous botch,—a mere enamelled vessel of dishonour ! Let the idle think of this.

Blessed is he who has found his work ; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose ; he has found it, and will follow it ! How, as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever-deepening river there, it runs and flows ;—draining off the sour festering water, gradually from the root of the remotest grass-blade ; making, instead of pestilential swamp, a green fruitful meadow with its clear-flowing stream. How blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and *its* value be great or small ! Labour is Life : from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God ; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness,—to all knowledge, “ self-know-

ledge" and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins. Knowledge? The knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that; for Nature herself accredits that, says Yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working: the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge; a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. "Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by Action alone." \* \* \*

Work is of a religious nature:—work is of a *brave* nature; which it is the aim of all religion to be. All work of man is as the swimmer's: a waste ocean threatens to devour him; if he front it not bravely, it will keep its word. By incessant wise defiance of it, lusty rebuke and buffet of it, behold how it loyally supports him, bears him as its conqueror along. "It is so," says Goethe, "with all things that man undertakes in this world."

Brave Sea-captain, Norse Sea-king,—Columbus, my hero, royalest Sea-king of all! it is no friendly environment this of thine, in the waste deep waters; around thee mutinous discouraged souls, behind thee disgrace and ruin, before thee the unpenetrated veil of Night. Brother, these wild water-mountains, bounding from their deep bases (ten miles deep, I am told), are not entirely there on thy behalf! Meseems *they* have other work than floating thee forward:—and the huge Winds, that sweep from Ursa Major to the Tropics and Equators, dancing their giant-waltz through the kingdoms of Chaos and Immensity, they care little about filling rightly or filling wrongly the small shoulder-of-mutton sails in this cockle-skiff of thine! Thou art not among articulate-speaking friends, my brother; thou art among immeasurable dumb monsters, tumbling, howling wide as the world here. Secret, far off, invisible to all hearts but thine, there lies a help in them: see how thou wilt get at that. Patiently thou wilt wait till the mad South-wester spend itself, saving thyself by dextrous science of defence, the while:

valiantly, with swift decision, wilt thou strike in, when the favouring East, the Possible, springs up. Mutiny of men thou wilt sternly repress ; weakness, despondency, thou wilt cheerily encourage : thou wilt swallow down complaint, unreason, weariness, weakness of others and thyself ;—how much wilt thou swallow down ! There shall be a depth of Silence in thee, deeper than this Sea, which is but ten miles deep : a Silence unsoundable ; known to God only. Thou shalt be a Great Man. Yes, my World-Soldier, thou of the World Marine-service,—thou wilt have to be *greater* than this tumultuous unmeasured World here round thee is : thou, in thy strong soul, as with wrestler's arms, shalt embrace it, harness it down ; and make it bear thee on, —to new Americas, or whither God wills ! \* \* \*

Older than all preached Gospels was this unpreached, inarticulate, but ineradicable, forever-enduring Gospel : Work, and therein have wellbeing. Man, Son of Earth and of Heaven, lies there not, in the innermost heart of thee, a Spirit of active Method, a Force for Work ;—and burns like a painfully smouldering fire, giving thee no rest till thou unfold it, till thou write it down in beneficent Facts around thee ! What is immethodic, waste, thou shalt make methodic, regulated, arable ; obedient and productive to thee. Wheresoever thou findest Disorder, there is thy eternal enemy ; attack him swiftly, subdue him ; make Order of him, the subject not of Chaos, but of Intelligence, Divinity and Thee ! The thistle that grows in thy path, dig it out, that a blade of useful grass, a drop of nourishing milk, may grow there instead. The waste cotton-shrub, gather its waste white down, spin it, weave it ; that, in place of idle litter, there may be folded webs, and the naked skin of man be covered.

But above all, where thou findest Ignorance, Stupidity, Brute-mindedness,—yes, there, with or without Church-tithes and Shovel-hat, with or without Talfourd-Mahon Copyrights, or were it with mere dungeons and gibbets and crosses, attack it, I say ; smite it wisely, unweariedly, and rest not while thou livest and it lives ;

but smite, smite, in the name of God! The Highest God, as I understand it, does audibly so command thee ; still audibly, if thou have ears to hear. He, even He, with his *unspoken* voice, awfuller than any Sinai thunders or syllabled speech of Whirlwinds ; for the SILENCE of deep Eternities, of Worlds from beyond the morning-stars, does it not speak to thee? The unborn Ages ; the old Graves, with their long-mouldering dust, the very tears that wetted it now all dry,—do not these speak to thee, what ear hath not heard? The deep Death-kingdoms, the Stars in their never-resting courses, all Space and all Time, proclaim it to thee in continual silent admonition. Thou too, if ever man should, shall work while it is called Today. For the Night cometh, wherein no man can work.

All true Work is sacred ; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labour, there is something of divineness. Labour, wide as the Earth, has its summit in Heaven. Sweat of the brow ; and up from that to sweat of the brain, sweat of the heart ; which includes all Kepler calculations, Newton meditations, all Sciences, all spoken Epics, all acted Heroisms, Martyrdoms,—up to that “Agony of bloody sweat,” which all men have called divine! O brother, if this is not “worship,” then I say, the more pity for worship ; for this is the noblest thing yet discovered under God’s sky. Who art thou that complainest of thy life of toil? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother ; see thy fellow Workmen there, in God’s Eternity ; surviving there, they alone surviving : sacred Band of the Immortals, celestial Bodyguard of the Empire of Mankind. Even in the weak Human Memory they survive so long, as saints, as heroes, as gods ; they alone surviving ; peopling, they alone, the unmeasured solitudes of Time ! To thee Heaven, though severe, is *not* unkind ; Heaven is kind,—as a noble Mother ; as that Spartan Mother, saying while she gave her son his shield, “With it, my son, or upon it!” Thou too shalt return *home* in honour ; to thy far-distant Home, in honour ; doubt it not,—if in the battle thou keep thy shield ! Thou, in

the Eternities and deepest Death-kingdoms, art not an alien ; thou everywhere art a denizen ! Complain not ; the very Spartans did not *complain*.

And who art thou that braggest of thy life of Idleness ; complacently shovest thy bright gilt equipages ; sumptuous cushions ; appliances for folding of the hands to mere sleep ? Looking up, looking down, around, behind or before, discernest thou, if it be not in Mayfair alone, any *idle* hero, saint, god, or even devil ? Not a vestige of one. In the Heavens, in the Earth, in the Waters under the Earth, is none like unto thee. Thou art an original figure in this Creation ; a denizen in Mayfair alone, in this extraordinary Century or Half-Century alone ! One monster there is in the world : the idle man. What is his “ Religion ” ? That Nature is a Phantasm, where cunning beggary or thievery may sometimes find good victual. That God is a lie ; and that Man and his Life are a lie.—Alas, alas, who of us is there that can say, I have worked ? The faithfulest of us are unprofitable servants ; the faithfulest of us know that best. The faithfulest of us may say, with sad and true old Samuel, “ Much of my life has been trifled away ! ” But he that has, and except “ on public occasions ” professes to have, no function but that of going idle in a graceful or graceless manner ; and of begetting sons to go idle ; and to address Chief Spinners and Diggers, who at least *are* spinning and digging, “ Ye scandalous persons who produce too much ”—My Corn-Law friends, on what imaginary still richer Eldorados, and true iron-spikes with law of gravitation, are ye rushing !

As to the Wages of Work there might innumerable things be said ; there will and must yet innumerable things be said and spoken, in St. Stephen’s and out of St. Stephen’s ; and gradually not a few things be ascertained and written, on Law-parchment, concerning this very matter :—“ Fair day’s-wages for a fair day’s-work ” is the most unrefusible demand ! Money-wages “ to the extent of keeping your worker alive that he may

work more ;" these, unless you mean to dismiss him straightway out of this world, are indispensable alike to the noblest Worker and to the least noble !

One thing only I will say here, in special reference to the former class, the noble and noblest ; but throwing light on all the other classes and their arrangements of this difficult matter : The "wages" of every noble Work do yet lie in Heaven or else Nowhere. Not in Bank-of-England bills, in Owen's Labour-bank, or any the most improved establishment of banking and money-changing, needest thou, heroic soul, present thy account of earnings. Human banks and labour-banks know thee not ; or know thee after generations and centuries have passed away, and thou art clean gone from "rewarding,"—all manner of bank-drafts, shop-tills, and Downing-street Exchequers lying very invisible, so far from thee ! Nay, at bottom, dost thou need any reward ? Was it thy aim and life-purpose to be filled with good things for thy heroism ; to have a life of pomp and ease, and be what men call "happy," in this world, or in any other world ? I answer for thee deliberately, No. The whole spiritual secret of the new epoch lies in this, that thou canst answer for thyself, with thy whole clearness of head and heart, deliberately, No !

My brother, the brave man has to give his Life away. Give it, I advise thee ;—thou dost not expect to *sell* thy Life in an adequate manner ? What price, for example, would content thee ? The just price of thy LIFE to thee, —why, God's entire Creation to thyself, the whole Universe of Space, the whole Eternity of Time, and what they hold : that is the price which would content thee ; that, and, if thou wilt be candid, nothing short of that ! It is thy all ; and for it thou wouldest have all. Thou art an unreasonable mortal ;—or rather thou art a poor *infinite* mortal, who, in thy narrow clay-prison here, *seemest* so unreasonable ! Thou wilt never sell thy Life, or any part of thy Life, in a satisfactory manner. Give it, like a royal heart ; let the price be Nothing : thou *hast* then, in a certain sense, got All for it ! The

heroic man,—and is not every man, God be thanked, a potential hero?—has to do so, in all times and circumstances. In the most heroic age, as in the most unheroic, he will have to say, as Burns said proudly and humbly of his little Scottish Songs, little dewdrops of Celestial Melody in an age when so much was unmelodious: “By Heaven, they shall either be invaluable or of no value; I do not need your guineas for them!” It is an element, which should, and must, enter deeply into all settlements of wages here below. They never will be “satisfactory” otherwise, they cannot, O Mammon Gospel, they never can!

## IV

## THE ONE INSTITUTION

(FROM BOOK IV, CHAPTER III)

WHO can despair of Governments that passes a Soldier’s Guard-house, or meets a redcoated man on the streets! That a body of men could be got together to kill other men when you bade them: this, *a priori*, does it not seem one of the impossiblest things? Yet look, behold it: in the stolidest of Donothing Governments, that impossibility is a thing done. See it there, with buff belts, red coats on its back; walking sentry at guard-houses, brushing white breeches in barracks; an indisputable palpable fact. Out of gray Antiquity, amid all finance difficulties, *stacearium-tallies*, ship-moneys, coat-and-conduct moneys, and vicissitudes of Chance and Time, there, down to the present blessed hour, it is.

Often, in these painfully decadent and painfully nascent Times, with their distresses, inarticulate gaspings and “impossibilities;” meeting a tall Lifeguardsman in his snow-white trousers, or seeing those two statuesque Lifeguardsmen in their frowning bearskins, pipe-clayed buckskins, on their coal-black sleek-fiery quadrupeds, riding sentry at the Horse-Guards,—it strikes one with

a kind of mournful interest, how, in such universal down-rushing and wrecked impotence of almost all old institutions, this oldest Fighting Institution is still so young! Fresh-complexioned, firm-limbed, six feet by the standard, this fighting man has verily been got up, and can fight. While so much has not yet got into being; while so much has gone gradually out of it, and become an empty Semblance or Clothes-suit; and highest king's-cloaks, mere chimeras parading under them so long, are getting unsightly to the earnest eye, unsightly, almost offensive, like a costlier kind of scarecrow's blanket,—here still is a reality!

The man in horsehair wig advances, promising that he will get me "justice:" he takes me into Chancery Law-Courts, into decades, half centuries of hubbub, of distracted jargon; and does *get* me—disappointment, almost desperation; and one refuge: that of dismissing him and his "justice" altogether out of my head. For I have work to do; I cannot spend my decades in mere arguing with other men about the exact wages of my work: I will work cheerfully with no wages, sooner than with a ten-years' gangrene or Chancery Lawsuit in my heart! He of the horsehair wig is a sort of failure; no substance, but a fond imagination of the mind. He of the shovel-hat, again, who comes forward professing that he will save my soul—O ye Eternities, of him in this place be absolute silence!—But he of the red coat, I say, is a success and no failure! He will veritably, if he get orders, draw out a long sword and kill me. No mistake there. He is a fact and not a shadow. Alive in this Year Forty-three, able and willing to do *his* work. In dim old centuries, with William Rufus, William of Ipres, or far earlier, he began; and has come down safe so far. Catapult has given place to cannon, pike has given place to musket, iron mail-shirt to coat of red cloth, saltpetre ropematch to percussion-cap; equipments, circumstances have all changed and again changed; but the human battle-engine, in the inside of any or of each of these, ready still to do battle, stands there, six feet in standard size. There are Pay-Offices,

Woolwich Arsenals, there is a Horse-Guards, War-Office, Captain-General; persuasive Sergeants, with tap of drum, recruit in market-towns and villages; and, on the whole, I say, here is your actual drilled fighting-man; here are your actual Ninety-thousand of such, ready to go into any quarter of the world and fight!

Strange, interesting, and yet most mournful to reflect on. Was this, then, of all the things mankind had some talent for, the one thing important to learn well, and bring to perfection; this of successfully killing one another? Truly you have learned it well, and carried the business to a high perfection. It is incalculable what, by arranging, commanding and regimenting, you can make of men. These thousand straight-standing firmset individuals, who shoulder arms, who march, wheel, advance, retreat; and are, for your behoof, a magazine charged with fiery death, in the most perfect condition of potential activity: few months ago, till the persuasive sergeant came, what were they? Multiform ragged losels, runaway apprentices, starved weavers, thievish valets; an entirely broken population, fast tending towards the treadmill. But the persuasive sergeant came; by tap of drum enlisted, or formed lists, of them, took heartily to drilling them;—and he and you have made them this! Most potent, effectual for all work whatsoever, is wise planning, firm combining and commanding among men. Let no man despair of Governments who looks on these two sentries at the Horse-Guards, and our United-Service Clubs! I could conceive an Emigration Service, a Teaching Service, considerable varietes of United and Separate Services, of the due thousands strong, all effective as this Fighting Service is; all doing *their* work, like it;—which work, much more than fighting, is henceforth the necessity of these New Ages we are got into! Much lies among us, convulsively, nigh desperately *struggling to be born*.

But mean Governments, as mean-limited individuals do, have stood by the physically indispensable; have realised that and nothing more. The Soldier is perhaps one of the most difficult things to realise; but Governments,

had they not realised him, could not have existed : accordingly he is here. O Heavens, if we saw an army ninety-thousand strong, maintained and fully equipt, in continual real action and battle against Human Starvation, against Chaos, Necessity, Stupidity, and our real "natural enemies," what a business were it ! Fighting and molesting not "the French," who, poor men, have a hard enough battle of their own in the like kind, and need no additional molesting from us ; but fighting and incessantly spearing down and destroying Falsehood, Nescience, Delusion, Disorder, and the Devil and his Angels ! Thou thyself, cultivated reader, hast done something in that alone true warfare ; but, alas, under what circumstances was it ? Thee no beneficent drill-sergeant, with any effectiveness, would rank in line beside thy fellows ; train, like a true didactic artist, by the wit of all past experience, to do thy soldiering ; encourage thee when right, punish thee when wrong, and everywhere with wise word-of-command say, Forward on this hand, Forward on that ! Ah, no : thou hadst to learn thy small-sword and platoon exercise where and how thou couldst ; to all mortals but thyself it was indifferent whether thou shouldst ever learn it. And the rations, and shilling a day, were they provided thee,—reduced as I have known brave Jean-Pauls, learning their exercise, to live on "water *without* the bread"? The rations ; or any furtherance of promotion to corporalship, lance-corporalship, or due cat-o'-nine tails, with the slightest reference to thy deserts, were not provided. Forethought, even as of a pipe-clayed drill-sergeant, did not preside over thee. To corporalship, lance-corporalship, thou didst attain ; alas, also to the halberts and cat : but thy rewarder and punisher seemed blind as the Deluge : neither lance-corporalship, nor even drummer's cat, because both appeared delirious, brought thee due profit.

It was well, all this, we know ;—and yet it was not well ! Forty soldiers, I am told, will disperse the largest Spitalfields mob : forty to ten-thousand, that is the proportion between drilled and undrilled. Much

there is which cannot yet be organised in this world ; but somewhat also which can, somewhat also which must. When one thinks, for example, what Books are become and becoming for us, what Operative Lancashires are become ; what a Fourth Estate, and innumerable Virtualities not yet got to be Actualities are become and becoming,—one sees Organisms enough in the dim huge Future ; and “ United Services ” quite other than the redcoat one ; and much, even in these years, struggling to be born !

## V

## CHIVALRY OF LABOUR

(FROM BOOK IV, CHAPTER VIII)

SOME “ Chivalry of Labour,” some noble Humanity and practical Divineness of Labour, will yet be realised on this Earth. Or why *will* ; why do we pray to Heaven, without setting our own shoulder to the wheel ? The Present, if it will have the Future accomplish, shall itself commence. Thou who prophesiest, who believest, begin thou to fulfil. Here or nowhere, now equally as at any time ! That outcast help-needing thing or person, trampled down under vulgar feet or hoofs, no help “ possible ” for it, no prize offered for the saving of it,—canst not thou save it, then, without prize ? Put forth thy hand, in God’s name ; know that “ impossible,” where Truth and Mercy and the everlasting Voice of Nature order, has no place in the brave man’s dictionary. That when all men have said “ Impossible,” and tumbled noisily elsewhere, and thou alone art left, then first thy time and possibility have come. It is for thee now ; do thou that, and ask no man’s counsel, but thy own only, and God’s. Brother, thou hast possibility in thee for much : the possibility of writing on the eternal skies the record of a heroic life. That noble downfallen or yet unborn “ Impossibility,” thou canst lift it up, thou canst, by thy soul’s travail, bring it into clear being. That

loud inane Actuality, with millions in its pocket, too "possible" that, which rolls along there, with quilted trumpeters blaring round it, and all the world escorting it as mute or vocal flunkey,—escort it not thou ; say to it, either nothing, or else deeply in thy heart: "Loud-blaring Nonentity, no force of trumpets, cash, Long-Acre art, or universal flunkeyhood of men, makes thee an Entity ; thou art a *Nonentity*, and deceptive Simulacrum, more accursed than thou seemest. Pass on in the Devil's name, unworshipped by at least one man, and leave the thoroughfare clear!"

Not on Ilion's or Latium's plains ; on far other plains and places henceforth can noble deeds be now done. Not on Ilion's plains ; how much less in Mayfair's drawingrooms ! Not in victory over poor brother French or Phrygians ; but in victory over Frost-jötuns, Marsh-giants, over demons of Discord, Idleness, Injustice, Unreason, and Chaos come again. None of the old Epics is longer possible. The Epic of French and Phrygians was comparatively a small Epic : but that of Flirts and Fribbles, what is that ? A thing that vanishes at cock-crowing,—that already begins to scent the morning air ! Game-preserving Aristocracies, let them "bush" never so effectually, cannot escape the Subtle Fowler. Game seasons will be excellent, and again will be indifferent, and by and by they will not be at all. The last Partridge of England, of an England where millions of men can get no corn to eat, will be shot and ended. Aristocracies with beards on their chins will find other work to do than amuse themselves with trundling-hoops.

But it is to you, ye Workers, who do already work, and are as grown men, noble and honourable in a sort, that the whole world calls for new work and nobleness. Subdue mutiny, discord, widespread despair, by manfulness, justice, mercy, and wisdom. Chaos is dark, deep as Hell ; let light be, and there is instead a green flowery World. Oh, it is great, and there is no other greatness. To make some nook of God's Creation a

little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God ; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier,—more blessed, less accursed ! It is work for a God. Sooty Hell of mutiny and savagery and despair can, by man's energy, be made a kind of Heaven ; cleared of its soot, of its mutiny, of its need to mutiny ; the everlasting arch of Heaven's azure overspanning *it* too, and its cunning mechanisms and tall chimney-steeple, as a birth of Heaven ; God and all men looking on it well pleased.

Unstained by wasteful deformities, by wasted tears or heart's-blood of men, or any defacement of the Pit, noble fruitful Labour, growing ever nobler, will come forth,—the grand sole miracle of Man ; whereby Man has risen from the low places of this Earth, very literally, into divine Heavens. Ploughers, Spinners, Builders ; Prophets, Poets, Kings ; Brindleys and Goethes, Odins and Arkwrights ; all martyrs, and noble men, and gods are of one grand Host ; immeasurable ; marching ever forward since the beginnings of the World. The enormous, all-conquering, flame-crowned Host, noble every soldier in it ; sacred, and alone noble. Let him who is not of it hide himself ; let him tremble for himself. Stars at every button cannot make him noble ; sheaves of Bath-garters, nor bushels of Georges ; nor any other contrivance but manfully enlisting in it, valiantly taking place and step in it. O Heavens, will he not bethink himself ; he too is so needed in the Host ! It were so blessed, thrice-blessed, for himself and for us all ! In hope of the Last Partridge, and some Duke of Weimar among our English Dukes, we will be patient yet a while.

“ The Future hides in it  
Gladness and sorrow ;  
We press still thorow,  
Nought that abides in it  
Daunting us,—onward.”

## LIFE AND LETTERS OF OLIVER CROMWELL

[In 1839 Mill suggested to Carlyle that Cromwell would be a good subject for an article in the *London and Westminster Review*. The project attracted Carlyle and he agreed to the proposal, but during Mill's absence on the Continent, Robertson, who was editing the *Review*, wrote to say that "he meant to do Cromwell himself." Carlyle was very angry. However, he determined to write a history of the Civil War, since the period seemed to him to be misunderstood and misrepresented by most of the historians. He found the task full of difficulties and resolved to confine himself to a biography of Cromwell. In preparation for that work he brought together a collection of Cromwell's letters and speeches with notes and elucidations, and, when this was finished, found that what he wanted was done, for no biography could offer a better picture of Cromwell than the Protector's own words. Accordingly, after "four years of abstruse toil, obscure speculations, futile wrestling, and misery," *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches: With Elucidations* was given to the world in 1845. Froude calls it "by far the most important contribution to English history which has been made in the present century," and it certainly revolutionised public opinion concerning Cromwell. For nearly two hundred years Cromwell had been misunderstood and abused. Carlyle's purpose was to allow him to speak for himself. The letters and speeches, illustrated by a continuous thread of narrative and criticism, form Cromwell's best vindication. John Richard Green describes the work as "an invaluable store of documents, edited with the care of an antiquary and the genius of a poet."]

### I

#### THE BATTLE OF DUNBAR

(FROM PART VI)

THE small Town of Dunbar stands, high and windy, looking down over its herring-boats, over its grim old Castle now much honeycombed,—on one of those pro-

jecting rock-promontories with which that shore of the Frith of Forth is niched and vandyked, as far as the eye can reach. A beautiful sea ; good land too, now that the plougher understands his trade ; a grim niched barrier of whinstone sheltering it from the chafings and tumblings of the big blue German Ocean. Seaward St. Abb's Head, of whinstone, bounds your horizon to the east, not very far off ; west, close by, is the deep bay, and fishy little village of Belhaven : the gloomy Bass and other rock-islets, and farther the Hills of Fife, and foreshadows of the Highlands, are visible as you look seaward. From the bottom of Belhaven bay to that of the next sea-bight St. Abb's-ward, the Town and its environs form a peninsula. Along the base of which peninsula, "not much above a mile and a half from sea to sea," Oliver Cromwell's Army, on Monday 2d of September 1650, stands ranked, with its tents and Town behind it,—in very forlorn circumstances. This now is all the ground that Oliver is lord of in Scotland. His Ships lie in the offing, with biscuit and transport for him ; but visible elsewhere in the Earth no help.

Landward as you look from the Town of Dunbar there rises, some short mile off, a dusky continent of barren heath Hills ; the Lammermoor, where only mountain-sheep can be at home. The crossing of which, by any of its boggy passes, and brawling stream-courses, no Army, hardly a solitary Scotch Packman could attempt, in such weather. To the edge of these Lammermoor Heights, David Lesley has betaken himself ; lies now along the outmost spur of them,—a long Hill of considerable height, which the Dunbar people call the Dun, Doon, or sometimes for fashion's sake the Down, adding to it the Teutonic *Hill* likewise, though *Dun* itself in old Celtic signifies Hill. On this Doon Hill lies David Lesley with the victorious Scotch Army, upwards of Twenty-thousand strong ; with the Committees of Kirk and Estates, the chief Dignitaries of the Country, and in fact the flower of what the pure Covenant in this the Twelfth year of its existence can still bring forth. There lies he since Sunday night on

the top and slope of this Doon Hill, with the impassable heath-continents behind him ; embraces, as within outspread tiger-claws, the base-line of Oliver's Dunbar peninsula ; waiting what Oliver will do. Cockburnspath with its ravines has been seized on Oliver's left, and made impassable ; behind Oliver is the sea ; in front of him Lesley, Doon Hill, and the heath-continent of Lammermoor. Lesley's force is of Three-and-twenty-thousand,<sup>1</sup> in spirits as of men chasing, Oliver's about half as many, in spirits as of men chased. What is to become of Oliver? \* \* \*

The base of Oliver's "Dunbar Peninsula," as we have called it (or Dunbar Pinfold where he is now hemmed in, upon "an entanglement very difficult"), extends from Belhaven Bay on his right, to Brocks-mouth House on his left ; "about a mile and a half from sea to sea." Brocks-mouth House, the Earl (now Duke) of Roxburgh's mansion, which still stands there, his soldiers now occupy at their extreme post on the left. As its name indicates, it is the *mouth* or issue of a small Rivulet, or *Burn*, called *Brock*, *Brocksburn* ; which, springing from the Lammermoor, and skirting David Lesley's Doon Hill, finds its egress here into the sea. The reader who would form an image to himself of the great Tuesday 3d of September 1650, at Dunbar, must note well this little *Burn*. It runs in a deep grassy glen, which the South-country Officers in those old Pamphlets describe as a "deep *ditch*, forty feet in depth, and about as many in width,"—ditch dug out by the little Brook itself, and carpeted with greensward, in the course of long thousands of years. It runs pretty close by the foot of Doon Hill ; forms, from this point to the sea, the boundary of Oliver's position ; his force is arranged in battle-order along the left bank of this Brocksburn, and its grassy glen ; he is busied all Monday, he and his Officers, in ranking them there. "Before sunrise on Monday" Lesley sent down his

<sup>1</sup> 27,000 say the English Pamphlets; 16,000 foot and 7,000 horse, says Sir Edward Walker (p. 182), who has access to know,

horse from the Hill-top, to occupy the other side of this Brook ; "about four in the afternoon" his train came down, his whole Army gradually came down ; and they now are ranking themselves on the opposite side of Brocksburn,—on rather narrow ground ; cornfields, but swiftly sloping upwards to the steep of Doon Hill. This goes on, in the wild showers and winds of Monday 2d September 1650, on both sides of the Rivulet of Brock. Whoever will begin the attack, must get across this Brook and its glen first ; a thing of much disadvantage.

Behind Oliver's ranks, between him and Dunbar, stand his tents ; sprinkled up and down, by battalions, over the face of this "Peninsula ;" which is a low though very uneven tract of ground ; now in our time all yellow with wheat and barley in the autumn season, but at that date only partially tilled,—describable by Yorkshire Hodgson as a place of plashes and rough bent-grass ; terribly beaten by showery winds that day, so that your tent will hardly stand. There was then but one Farm-house on this tract, where now are not a few : thither were Oliver's Cannon sent this morning ; they had at first been lodged "in the Church," an edifice standing then as now somewhat apart, "at the south end of Dunbar." We have notice of only one other "small house," belike some poor shepherd's homestead, in Oliver's tract of ground : it stands close by the Brock Rivulet itself, and in the bottom of the little glen ; at a place where the banks of it flatten themselves out into a slope passable for carts : this of course, as the one "pass" in that quarter, it is highly important to seize. Pride and Lambert lodged "six horse and fifteen foot" in this poor hut early in the morning : Lesley's horse came across, and drove them out ; killing some and "taking three prisoners ;"—and so got possession of this pass and hut ; but did not keep it. Among the three prisoners was one musketeer, "a very stout man, though he has but a wooden arm," and some iron hook at the end of it, poor fellow. He "fired thrice," not without effect, with his wooden arm ;

and was not taken without difficulty : a handfast stubborn man ; they carried him across to General Lesley to give some account of himself. In several of the old Pamphlets, which agree in all the details of it, this is what we read :

“ General *David* Lesley (old Leven,” the other Lesley, “ being in the Castle of Edinburgh, as they relate), asked this man, If the Enemy did intend to fight ? He replied, ‘ What do you think we come here for ? We come for nothing else ! ’—‘ Soldier,’ says Lesley, ‘ how will you fight, when you have shipped half of your men, and all your great guns ? ’ The Soldier replied, ‘ Sir, if you please to draw down your men, you shall find both men and great guns too ! ’”—A most dogged handfast man, this with the wooden arm, and iron hook on it ! “ One of the Officers asked, How he durst answer the General so saucily ? He said, ‘ I only answer the question put to me ! ’ ” Lesley sent him across, free again, by a trumpet : he made his way to Cromwell ; reported what had passed, and added doggedly, He for one had lost twenty shillings by the business,—plundered from him in this action. “ The Lord General gave him thereupon two pieces,” which I think are forty shillings ; and sent him away rejoicing.—This is the adventure at the “ pass ” by the shepherd’s hut in the bottom of the glen, close by the Brocksburn itself.

And now farther, on the great scale, we are to remark very specially that there is just one other “ pass ” across the Brocksburn ; and this is precisely where the London road now crosses it ; about a mile east from the former pass, and perhaps two gunshots west from Brocksouth House. There the great road then as now crosses the Burn of Brock ; the steep grassy glen, or “ broad ditch forty feet deep,” flattening itself out here once more into a passable slope : passable, but still steep on the southern or Lesley side, still mounting up there, with considerable acclivity, into a high table-ground, out of which the Doon Hill, as outskirt of the Lammermoor, a short mile to your right, gradually gathers itself. There, at

this "pass," on and about the present London road, as you discover after long dreary dim examining, took place the brunt or essential agony of the Battle of Dunbar long ago. Read in the extinct old Pamphlets, and ever again obstinately read, till some light rise in them, look even with unmilitary eyes at the ground as it now is, you do at last obtain small glimmerings of distinct features here and there,—which gradually coalesce into a kind of image for you ; and some spectrum of the Fact becomes visible ; rises veritable, face to face, on you, grim and sad in the depths of the old dead Time. Yes, my travelling friends, vehiculating in gigs or otherwise over that piece of London road, you may say to yourselves, Here without monument is the grave of a valiant thing which was done under the Sun ; the footprint of a Hero, not yet quite undistinguishable, is here !—

"The Lord General about four o'clock," say the old Pamphlets, "went into the Town to take some refreshment," a hasty late dinner, or early supper, whichever we may call it ; "and very soon returned back,"—having written Sir Arthur's Letter, I think, in the interim. Coursing about the field, with enough of things to order ; walking at last with Lambert in the Park or Garden of Brocksouth House, he discerns that Lesley is astir on the Hill-side ; altering his position somewhat. That Lesley in fact is coming wholly down to the basis of the Hill, where his horse had been since sunrise : coming wholly down to the edge of the Brook and glen, among the sloping harvest-fields there ; and also is bringing up his left wing of horse, most part of it, towards his right ; edging himself, "shogging," as Oliver calls it, his whole line more and more to the right ! His meaning is, to get hold of Brocksouth House and the pass of the Brook there ; after which it will be free to him to attack us when he will !—Lesley, in fact, considers, or at least the Committee of Estates and Kirk consider, that Oliver is lost ; that, on the whole, he must not be left to retreat, but must be attacked and annihilated here. A vague story, due to Bishop Burnet, the watery source of many such, still circulates about the world. That it

was the Kirk Committee who forced Lesley down against his will ; that Oliver, at sight of it, exclaimed, "The Lord hath delivered" &c. : which nobody is in the least bound to believe. It appears, from other quarters, that Lesley *was* advised or sanctioned in this attempt by the Committee of Estates and Kirk, but also that he was by no means hard to advise ; that, in fact, lying on top of Doon Hill, shelterless in such weather, was no operation to spin out beyond necessity ;—and that if anybody pressed too much upon him with advice to come down and fight, it was likeliest to be Royalist Civil Dignitaries, who had plagued him with their cavillings at his cunctations, at his "secret fellow-feeling for the Sectarians and Regicides," ever since this War began. The poor Scotch Clergy have enough of their own to answer for in this business ; let every back bear the burden that belongs to it. In a word, Lesley descends, has been descending all day, and "shogs" himself to the right,—urged, I believe, by manifold counsel, and by the nature of the case ; and, what is equally important for us, Oliver sees him, and sees through him, in this movement of his.

At sight of this movement, Oliver suggests to Lambert standing by him, Does it not give *us* an advantage, if we, instead of him, like to begin the attack ? Here is the Enemy's right wing coming out to the open space, free to be attacked on any side ; and the main-battle, hampered in narrow sloping ground between Doon Hill and the Brook, has no room to manœuvre or assist : beat this right wing where it now stands ; take it in flank and front with an overpowering force,—it is driven upon its own main-battle, the whole Army is beaten ? Lambert eagerly assents, "had meant to say the same thing." Monk, who comes up at the moment, likewise assents ; as the other Officers do, when the case is set before them. It is the plan resolved upon for battle. The attack shall begin tomorrow before dawn.

And so the soldiers stand to their arms, or lie within instant reach of their arms, all night ; being upon an engagement very difficult indeed. The night is wild

and wet ;—2d of September means 12th by our calendar : the Harvest Moon wades deep among clouds of sleet and hail. Whoever has a heart for prayer, let him pray now, for the wrestle of death is at hand. Pray,—and withal keep his powder dry ! And be ready for extremities, and quit himself like a man !—Thus they pass the night ; making that Dunbar Peninsula and Brook Rivulet long memorable to me. We English have some tents ; the Scots have none. The hoarse sea moans bodeful, swinging low and heavy against these whinstone bays ; the sea and the tempests are abroad, all else asleep but we,—and there is One that rides on the wings of the wind.

Towards three in the morning the Scotch foot, by order of a Major-General say some, extinguish their matches, all but two in a company ; cower under the corn-shocks, seeking some imperfect shelter and sleep. Be wakeful, ye English ; watch, and pray, and keep your powder dry. About four o'clock comes order to my puddingheaded Yorkshire friend, that his regiment must mount and march straightway ; his and various other regiments march, pouring swiftly to the left to Brocksmouth House, to the Pass over the Brock. With overpowering force let us storm the Scots right wing there ; beat that, and all is beaten. Major Hodgson riding along, heard, he says, "a Cornet praying in the night ;" a company of poor men, I think, making worship there, under the void Heaven, before battle joined : Major Hodgson, giving his charge to a brother Officer, turned aside to listen for a minute, and worship and pray along with them ; haply his last prayer on this Earth, as it might prove to be. But no : this Cornet prayed with such effusion as was wonderful ; and imparted strength to my Yorkshire friend, who strengthened his men by telling them of it. And the Heavens, in their mercy, I think, have opened us a way of deliverance !—The Moon gleams out, hard and blue, riding among hail-clouds ; and over St. Abb's Head a streak of dawn is rising.

And now is the hour when the attack should be, and

no Lambert is yet here, he is ordering the line far to the right yet ; and Oliver occasionally, in Hodgson's hearing, is impatient for him. The Scots too, on this wing, are awake ; thinking to surprise us ; there is their trumpet sounding, we heard it once ; and Lambert, who was to lead the attack, is not here. The Lord General is impatient ;—behold Lambert at last ! The trumpets peal, shattering with fierce clangour Night's silence ; the cannons awaken along all the Line : “The Lord of Hosts ! The Lord of Hosts !” On, my brave ones, on !—

The dispute “on this right wing was hot and stiff, for three quarters of an hour.” Plenty of fire, from fieldpieces, snaphances, matchlocks, entertains the Scotch main-battle across the Brock ;—poor stiffened men, roused from the corn-shocks with their matches all out ! But here on the right, their horse, “with lancers in the front rank,” charge desperately ; drive us back across the hollow of the Rivulet ;—back a little ; but the Lord gives us courage, and we storm home again, horse and foot, upon them, with a shock like tornado tempests ; break them, beat them, drive them all adrift. “Some fled towards Copperspath, but most across their own foot.” Their own poor foot, whose matches were hardly well alight yet ! Poor men, it was a terrible awakening for them : fieldpieces and charge of foot across the Brocksburn ; and now here is their own horse in mad panic trampling them to death. Above Three-thousand killed upon the place : “I never saw such a charge of foot and horse,” says one ; nor did I. Oliver was still near to Yorkshire Hodgson when the shock succeeded ; Hodgson heard him say, “They run ! I profess they run !” And over St. Abb's Head and the German Ocean, just then, bursts the first gleam of the level Sun upon us, “and I heard Nol say, in the words of the Psalmist, ‘Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered,’”—or in Rous's metre,

Let God arise, and scattered  
Let all his enemies be ;  
And let all those that do him hate  
Before his presence flee !

Even so. The Scotch Army is shivered to utter ruin ; rushes in tumultuous wreck, hither, thither ; to Belhaven, or, in their distraction, even to Dunbar, the chase goes as far as Haddington ; led by Hacker. "The Lord General made a halt," says Hodgson, "and sang the Hundred-and-seventeenth Psalm," till our horse could gather for the chase. Hundred-and-seventeenth Psalm, at the foot of the Doon Hill ; there we uplift it, to the tune of Bangor, or some still higher score, and roll it strong and great against the sky :

O give ye praise unto the Lord,  
All nati-ons that be ;  
Likewise ye people all, accord  
His name to magnify !

For great to-us-ward ever are  
His lovingkindnesses ;  
His truth endures forevermore ;  
The Lord O do ye bless !

And now, to the chase again.

The Prisoners are Ten-thousand,—all the foot in a mass. Many Dignitaries are taken ; not a few are slain ; of whom see Printed Lists,—full of blunders. Provost Jaffray of Aberdeen, Member of the Scots Parliament, one of the Committee of Estates, was very nearly slain ; a trooper's sword was in the air to sever him, but one cried, He is a man of consequence ; he can ransom himself!—and the trooper kept him prisoner. The first of the Scots Quakers, by and by ; and an official person much reconciled to Oliver. Ministers also of the Kirk Committee were slain ; two Ministers I find taken, poor Carstairs of Glasgow, poor Waugh of some other place,—of whom we shall transiently hear again.

General David Lesley, vigorous for flight as for other things, got to Edinburgh by nine o'clock ; poor old Leven, not so light of movement, did not get there till two. Tragical enough. What a change since January 1644, when we marched out of this same Dunbar up to the knees in snow ! It was to help and save these very

men that we then marched ; with the Covenant in all our hearts. We have stood by the letter of the Covenant ; fought for our Covenanted Stuart King as we could ;—they again, they stand by the substance of it, and have trampled us and the letter of it into this ruinous state !—Yes, my poor friends ;—and now be wise, be taught ! The letter of your Covenant, in fact, will never rally again in this world. The spirit and substance of it, please God, will never die in this or in any world.

Such is Dunbar Battle ; which might also be called Dunbar Drove, for it was a frightful rout. Brought on by miscalculation ; misunderstanding of the difference between substances and semblances ;—by mismanagement, and the chance of war.

### III

#### DEATH OF THE PROTECTOR

(FROM PART X)

OLIVER's look was yet strong ; and young for his years, which were Fifty-nine last April. The “Three-score and ten years,” the Psalmist's limit, which probably was often in Oliver's thoughts and in those of others there, might have been anticipated for him : Ten Years more of Life ;—which, we may compute, would have given another History to all the Centuries of England. But it was not to be so, it was to be otherwise. Oliver's health, as we might observe, was but uncertain in late times ; often “indisposed” the spring before last. His course of life had not been favourable to health ! “A burden too heavy for man !” as he himself, with a sigh, would sometimes say. Incessant toil ; inconceivable labour, of head and heart and hand ; toil, peril, and sorrow manifold, continued for near Twenty years now, had done their part : those robust life-energies, it afterwards appeared, had been gradually eaten out.

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Like a Tower strong to the eye, but with its foundations undermined; which has not long to stand; the fall of which, on any shock, may be sudden.—

The Manzinis and Dues de Crequi, with their splendours, and congratulations about Dunkirk, interesting to the street-populations and general public, had not yet withdrawn, when at Hampton Court there had begun a private scene, of much deeper and quite opposite interest there. The Lady Claypole, Oliver's favourite Daughter, a favourite of all the world, had fallen sick we know not when; lay sick now,—to death, as it proved. Her disease was of internal female nature; the painfullest and most harassing to mind and sense, it is understood, that falls to the lot of a human creature. Hampton Court we can fancy once more, in those July days, a house of sorrow; pale Death knocking there, as at the door of the meanest hut. "She had great sufferings, great exercises of spirit." Yes:—and in the depths of the old Centuries, we see a pale anxious Mother, anxious Husband, anxious weeping Sisters, a poor young Frances weeping anew in her weeds. "For the last fourteen days" his Highness has been by her bedside at Hampton Court, unable to attend to any public business whatever. Be still, my Child; trust thou yet in God: in the waves of the Dark River, there too is He a God of help!—On the 6th day of August she lay dead; at rest forever. My young, my beautiful, my brave! She is taken from me; I am left bereaved of her. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!—

"His Highness," says Harvey, "being at Hampton Court, sickened a little before the Lady Elizabeth died. Her decease was on Friday 6th of August 1658; she having lain long under great extremity of bodily pain, which, with frequent and violent convulsion-fits, brought her to her end. But as to his Highness, it was observed that his sense of her outward misery, in the pains she endured, took deep impression upon him; who indeed was ever a most indulgent and tender Father;—his affections" too "being regulated and bounded by such

Christian wisdom and prudence, as did eminently shine in filling-up not only that relation of a Father, but also all other relations; wherein he was a most rare and singular example. And no doubt but the sympathy of his spirit with his sorely afflicted and dying Daughter "did break him down at this time; "considering also,"—innumerable other considerations of sufferings and toils, "which made me often wonder he was able to hold-up so long; except" indeed "that he was borne up by a Supernatural Power at a more than ordinary rate. As a mercy to the truly Christian World, and to us of these Nations, had we been worthy of him!"—

The same authority, who unhappily is not chronological, adds elsewhere this little picture, which we must take with us: "At Hampton Court, a few days after the death of the Lady Elizabeth, which touched him nearly,—being then himself under bodily distempers, forerunners of that Sickness which was to death, and in his bedchamber,—he called for his Bible, and desired an honourable and godly person there, with others, present, To read unto him that passage in *Philippians* Fourth: '*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere, and by all things, I am instructed; both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me.*'<sup>1</sup> Which read,—said he, to use his own words as near as I can remember them: 'This Scripture did once save my life; when my eldest Son'" poor Robert "died; which went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did.' And then repeating the words of the text himself, and reading the tenth and eleventh verses, of Paul's contention, and submission to the will of God in all conditions,—said he: 'It's true, Paul, *you* have learned this, and attained to this measure of grace: but what shall *I* do? Ah poor creature, it is a hard lesson for me to take out! I find it so!' But reading on to the thirteenth verse, where Paul saith, '*I can do all things*

<sup>1</sup> *Philippians*, iv. 11, 12, 13.

*through Christ that strengtheneth me*,'—then faith began to work, and his heart to find support and comfort, and he said thus to himself, 'He that was Paul's Christ is my Christ too!' And so drew waters out of the well of Salvation."

In the same dark days, occurred George Fox's third and last interview with Oliver. Their first interview we have seen. The second, which had fallen out some two years ago, did not prosper quite so well. George, riding into Town "one evening," with some "Edward Pyot" or other broadbrimmed man, espied the Protector "at Hyde Park Corner among his Guards," and made up to his carriage-window, in spite of the opposition; and was altogether cordially welcomed there. But on the following day, at Whitehall, the Protector "spake lightly;" he sat down loosely "on a table," and "spake light things to me,"—in fact, rather quizzed me; finding my enormous sacred Self-confidence none of the least of my attainments! Such had been our second interview; here now is the third and last.—George dates nothing; and his facts everywhere lie round him like the leather-parings of his old shop: but we judge it may have been about the time when the Manzinis and Dues de Crequi were parading in their gilt coaches, That George and two Friends "going out of Town," on a summer day, "two of Hacker's men" had met them,—taken them, brought them to the Mews. "Prisoners there a while;"—but the Lord's power was over Hacker's men; they had to let us go. Whereupon:

"The same day, taking boat I went down" (*up*) "to Kingston, and from thence to Hampton Court, to speak with the Protector about the Sufferings of Friends. I met him riding into Hampton-Court Park; and before I came to him, as he rode at the head of his Lifeguard, I saw and felt a waft" (*whiff*) "of death go forth against him."— Or in favour of him, George? His life, if thou knew it, has not been a merry thing for this man, now or heretofore! I fancy he has been looking, this long while, to give it up, whenever the

Commander-in-Chief required. To quit his laborious sentry-post ; honourably lay-up his arms, and he gone to his rest :—all Eternity to rest in, O George ! Was thy own life merry, for example, in the hollow of the tree ; clad permanently in leather ? And does kingly purple, and governing refractory worlds instead of stitching coarse shoes, make it merrier ? The waft of death is not against *him*, I think,—perhaps against thee, and me, and others, O George, when the Nell-Gwyn Defender and Two Centuries of all-victorious Cant have come in upon us ! My unfortunate George —“a waft of death go forth against him ; and when I came to him, he looked like a dead man. After I had laid the Sufferings of Friends before him, and had warned him according as I was moved to speak to him, he bade me come to his house. So I returned to Kingston ; and, the next day, went up to Hampton Court to speak farther with him. But when I came, Harvey, who was one that waited on him, told me the Doctors were not willing that I should speak with him. So I passed away, and never saw him more.”

Friday, the 20th of August 1658, this was probably the day on which George Fox saw Oliver riding into Hampton Park with his Guards, for the last time. That Friday, as we find, his Highness seemed much better : but on the morrow a sad change had taken place ; feverish symptoms, for which the Doctors rigorously prescribed quiet. Saturday to Tuesday the symptoms continued ever worsening : a kind of tertian ague, “bastard tertian” as the old Doctors name it ; for which it was ordered that his Highness should return to Whitehall, as to a more favourable air in that complaint. On Tuesday accordingly he quitted Hampton Court ;—never to see it more.

“His time was come,” says Harvey ; “and neither prayers nor tears could prevail with God to lengthen out his life and continue him longer to us. Prayers abundantly and incessantly poured out on his behalf, both publicly and privately, as was observed, in a more than ordinary way. Besides many a secret sigh,—

secret and unheard by men, yet like the cry of Moses, more loud, and strongly laying hold on God, than many spoken supplications. All which, the hearts of God's People being thus mightily stirred up,—did seem to beget confidence in some, and hopes in all; yea some thoughts in himself, that God would restore him."

"Prayers public and private:" they are worth imagining to ourselves. Meetings of Preachers, Chaplains, and Godly Persons; "Owen, Goodwin, Sterry, with a company of others, in an adjoining room;" in Whitehall, and elsewhere over religious London and England, fervent outpourings of many a loyal heart. For there were hearts to whom the nobleness of this man was known; and his worth to the Puritan Cause was evident. Prayers,—strange enough to us; in a dialect fallen obsolete, forgotten now. Authentic wrestlings of ancient Human Souls,—who were alive then, with their affections, awe-struck pieties; with their Human Wishes, risen to be *transcendent*, hoping to prevail with the Inexorable. All swallowed now in the depths of dark Time; which is full of such, since the beginning!—Truly it is a great scene of World-History, this in old Whitehall: Oliver Cromwell drawing nigh to his end. The exit of Oliver Cromwell and of English Puritanism; a great Light, one of our few authentic Solar Luminaries, going down now amid the clouds of Death. Like the setting of a great victorious Summer Sun; its course now finished. "*So stirbt ein Held*," says Schiller, "So dies a Hero! Sight worthy to be worshipped!"—He died, this Hero Oliver, in Resignation to God; as the Brave have all done. "We could not be more desirous he should abide," says the pious Harvey, "than he was content and willing to be gone." The struggle lasted, amid hope and fear, for ten days.—Some small miscellaneous traits, and confused gleanings of last-words; and then our poor History ends.

## LIFE OF JOHN STERLING

[JOHN STERLING was a young man of distinguished talents, though of no great achievement, with whom Carlyle formed a close friendship. He became a deacon in the Church of England, but after some months ceased from pastoral work, owing to his inability to accept the orthodox creed. He died in 1844, appointing Carlyle and Archdeacon Hare, his old tutor and vicar, as his literary executors. It was agreed that Hare should write a biography of Sterling and edit his literary remains, but Hare's biography seemed to Carlyle to lay too much stress on the theological controversies which formed but a small part of Sterling's life and interests. Accordingly *The Life of John Sterling*, one of the most beautiful of biographies, was written between January and June, 1851, and published in the October of that year. It is a remarkable testimony to the attraction of Sterling's personality that Carlyle, Mill, and Hare were all anxious to write his life. The extract describing Coleridge's character and conversation is one of the most famous passages Carlyle ever wrote, and expresses his attitude towards what he was fond of calling "transcendental moonshine." Sir George Trevelyan in his *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, speaking of the literary conservatism of his famous uncle, says "little as he was aware of it, it was no slight privation . . . that one who so keenly tasted the exquisite trifling of Plato should never have tasted the description of Coleridge's talk in *The Life of John Sterling*—a passage that yields to nothing of its own class in the *Protagoras* or the *Symposium*."]

## COLERIDGE

### (CHAPTER VIII)

COLERIDGE sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke-tumult, like a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle; attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable

brave souls still engaged there. His express contributions to poetry, philosophy, or any specific province of human literature or enlightenment, had been small and sadly intermittent ; but he had, especially among young inquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character. He was thought to hold, he alone in England, the key of German and other Transcendentalisms ; knew the sublime secret of believing by "the reason" what "the understanding" had been obliged to fling out as incredible ; and could still, after Hume and Voltaire had done their best and worst with him, profess himself an orthodox Christian, and say and print to the Church of England, with its singular old rubrics and surplices at Allhallowtide, *Esto perpetua*. A sublime man ; who, alone in those dark days, had saved his crown of spiritual manhood ; escaping from the black materialisms, and revolutionary deluges, with "God, Freedom, Immortality" still his : a king of men. The practical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer : but to the rising spirits of the young generation he had this dusky sublime character ; and sat there as a kind of *Magus*, girt in mystery and enigma ; his Dodona oak-grove (Mr. Gilman's house at Highgate) whispering strange things, uncertain whether oracles or jargon.

The Gilmans did not encourage much company, or excitation of any sort, round their sage ; nevertheless access to him, if a youth did reverently wish it, was not difficult. He would stroll about the pleasant garden with you, sit in the pleasant rooms of the place,—perhaps take you to his own peculiar room, high up, with a rearward view, which was the chief view of all. A really charming outlook, in fine weather. Close at hand, wide sweep of flowery leafy gardens, their few houses mostly hidden, the very chimney-pots veiled under blossomy umbrage, flowed gloriously down hill ; gloriously issuing in wide-tufted undulating plain-country, rich in all charms of field and town. Waving blooming country of the brightest green ; dotted all over with handsome villas, handsome groves ; crossed

by roads and human traffic, here inaudible or heard only as a musical hum: and behind all swam, under olive-tinted haze, the illimitable limitary ocean of London, with its domes and steeples definite in the sun, big Paul's and the many memories attached to it hanging high over all. Nowhere, of its kind, could you see a grander prospect on a bright summer day, with the set of the air going southward,—southward, and so draping with the city-smoke not *you* but the city. Here for hours would Coleridge talk, concerning all conceivable or inconceivable things; and liked nothing better than to have an intelligent, or failing that, even a silent and patient human listener. He distinguished himself to all that ever heard him as at least the most surprising talker extant in this world,—and to some small minority, by no means to all, as the most excellent.

The good man, he was now getting old, towards sixty perhaps; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings; a life heavy-laden, half-vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment. Brow and head were round, and of massive weight, but the face was flabby and irresolute. The deep eyes, of a light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called flabby and irresolute; expressive of weakness under possibility of strength. He hung loosely on his limbs, with knees bent, and stooping attitude; in walking, he rather shuffled than decisively stept; and a lady once remarked, he never could fix which side of the garden-walk would suit him best, but continually shifted, in corkscrew fashion, and kept trying both. A heavy-laden, high-aspiring and surely much-suffering man. His voice, naturally soft and good, had contracted itself into a plaintive snuffle and singsong; he spoke as if preaching,—you would have said, preaching earnestly and also hopelessly the weightiest things. I still recollect his “object” and “subject,” terms of continual recurrence in the Kantean province; and how he sung

and snuffled them into “om-m-mject” and “sum-m-mject,” with a kind of solemn shake or quaver, as he rolled along. No talk, in his century or in any other, could be more surprising.

Sterling, who assiduously attended him, with profound reverence, and was often with him by himself, for a good many months, gives a record of their first colloquy.<sup>1</sup> Their colloquies were numerous, and he had taken note of many; but they are all gone to the fire, except this first, which Mr. Hare has printed,—unluckily without date. It contains a number of ingenious, true and half-true observations, and is of course a faithful epitome of the things said; but it gives small idea of Coleridge's way of talking;—this one feature is perhaps the most recognisable, “Our interview lasted for three hours, during which he talked two hours and three quarters.” Nothing could be more copious than his talk; and furthermore it was always, virtually or literally, of the nature of a monologue; suffering no interruption, however reverent; hastily putting aside all foreign additions, annotations, or most ingenuous desires for elucidation, as well-meant superfluities which would never do. Besides, it was talk not flowing anywhither like a river, but spreading everywhither in inextricable currents and regurgitations like a lake or sea; terribly deficient in definite goal or aim, nay often in logical intelligibility; *what you were to believe or do, on any earthly or heavenly thing, obstinately refusing to appear from it.* So that, most times, you felt logically lost; swamped near to drowning in this tide of ingenious vocables, spreading out boundless as if to submerge the world.

To sit as a passive bucket and be pumped into, whether you consent or not, can in the long-run be exhilarating to no creature; how eloquent soever the flood of utterance that is descending. But if it be withal a confused unintelligible flood of utterance, threatening to submerge all known landmarks of thought, and drown the world and you!—I have heard

<sup>1</sup> Biography by Hare, pp. xvi.-xxvi.

Coleridge talk, with eager musical energy, two stricken hours, his face radiant and moist, and communicate no meaning whatsoever to any individual of his hearers,—certain of whom, I for one, still kept eagerly listening in hope; the most had long before given up, and formed (if the room were large enough) secondary humming groups of their own. He began anywhere: you put some question to him, made some suggestive observation: instead of answering this, or decidedly setting out towards answer of it, he would accumulate formidable apparatus, logical swim-bladders, transcendental life-preservers and other precautionary and vehicular gear, for setting out; perhaps did at last get under way,—but was swiftly solicited, turned aside by the glance of some radiant new game on this hand or that, into new courses; and ever into new; and before long into all the Universe, where it was uncertain what game you would catch, or whether any.

His talk, alas, was distinguished, like himself, by irresolution: it disliked to be troubled with conditions, abstinences, definite fulfilments;—loved to wander at its own sweet will, and make its auditor and his claims and humble wishes a mere passive bucket for itself! He had knowledge about many things and topics, much curious reading; but generally all topics led him, after a pass or two, into the high seas of theosophic philosophy, the hazy infinitude of Kantean transcendentalism, with its “sum-m-mjects” and “om-m-mjects.” Sad enough; for with such indolent impatience of the claims and ignorances of others, he had not the least talent for explaining this or anything unknown to them; and you swam and fluttered in the mistiest wide unintelligible deluge of things, for most part in a rather profitless uncomfortable manner.

Glorious islets, too, I have seen rise out of the haze; but they were few, and soon swallowed in the general element again. Balmy sunny islets, islets of the blest and the intelligible:—on which occasions those secondary humming groups would all cease humming, and

hang breathless upon the eloquent words ; till once your islet got wrapt in the mist again, and they could recommence humming. Eloquent artistically expressive words you always had ; piercing radiances of a most subtle insight came at intervals ; tones of noble pious sympathy, recognisable as pious though strangely coloured, were never wanting long : but in general you could not call this aimless, cloudeapt, cloudbased, lawlessly meandering human discourse of reason by the name of "excellent talk," but only of "surprising ;" and were reminded bitterly of Hazlitt's account of it : "Excellent talker, very,—if you let him start from no premises and come to no conclusion." Coleridge was not without what talkers call wit, and there were touches of prickly sarcasm in him, contemptuous enough of the world and its idols and popular dignitaries ; he had traits even of poetic humour : but in general he seemed deficient in laughter ; or indeed in sympathy for concrete human things on the sunny or on the stormy side. One right peal of concrete laughter at some convicted flesh-and-blood absurdity, one burst of noble indignation at some injustice or depravity, rubbing elbows with us on this solid Earth, how strange would it have been in that Kantean haze-world, and how infinitely cheering amid its vacant air-castles and dim-melting ghosts and shadows ! None such ever came. His life had been an abstract thinking and dreaming, idealistic, passed amid the ghosts of defunct bodies and of unborn ones. The moaning singsong of that theosophico-metaphysical monotony left on you, at last, a very dreary feeling.

In close colloquy, flowing within narrower banks, I suppose he was more definite and apprehensible ; Sterling in aftertimes did not complain of his unintelligibility, or imputed it only to the abstruse high nature of the topics handled. Let us hope so, let us try to believe so ! There is no doubt but Coleridge could speak plain words on things plain : his observations and responses on the trivial matters that occurred were as simple as the commonest man's, or were even dis-

tinguished by superior simplicity as well as pertinency. "Ah, your tea is too cold, Mr. Coleridge!" mourned the good Mrs. Gilman once, in her kind, reverential and yet protective manner, handing him a very tolerable though belated cup.—"It's better than I deserve!" snuffed he, in a low hoarse murmur, partly courteous, chiefly pious, the tone of which still abides with me: "It's better than I deserve!"

But indeed, to the young ardent mind, instinct with pious nobleness, yet driven to the grim deserts of Radicalism for a faith, his speculations had a charm much more than literary, a charm almost religious and prophetic. The constant gist of his discourse was lamentation over the sunk condition of the world; which he recognised to be given up to Atheism and Materialism, full of mere sordid misbeliefs, mispursuits, and misresults. All Science had become mechanical; the science not of men, but of a kind of human beavers. Churches themselves had died away into a godless mechanical condition; and stood there as mere Cases of Articles, mere Forms of Churches; like the dried carcasses of once swift camels, which you find left withering in the thirst of the universal desert,—ghastly portents for the present, beneficent ships of the desert no more. Men's souls were blinded, hebetated; sunk under the influence of Atheism and Materialism, and Hume and Voltaire: the world for the present was as an extinct world, deserted of God, and incapable of well-doing till it changed its heart and spirit. This, expressed I think with less of indignation and with more of long-drawn querulousness, was always recognisable as the ground-tone:—in which truly a pious young heart, driven into Radicalism and the opposition party, could not but recognise a too sorrowful truth; and ask of the Oracle, with all earnestness, What remedy, then?

The remedy, though Coleridge himself professed to see it as in sunbeams, could not, except by processes unspeakably difficult, be described to you at all. On the whole, those dead Churches, this dead English Church especially, must be brought to life again. Why

not? It was not dead; the soul of it, in this parched-up body, was tragically asleep only. Atheistic Philosophy was true on its side, and Hume and Voltaire could on their own ground speak irrefragably for themselves against any Church: but lift the Church and them into a higher sphere of argument, *they* died into inanition, the Church revivified itself into pristine florid vigour,—became once more a living ship of the desert, and invincibly bore you over stock and stone. But how, but how! By attending to the "reason" of man, said Coleridge, and duly chaining up the "understanding" of man: the *Vernunft* (Reason) and *Verstand* (Understanding) of the Germans, it all turned upon these, if you could well understand them,—which you couldn't. For the rest, Mr. Coleridge had on the anvil various Books, especially was about to write one grand Book *On the Logos*, which would help to bridge the chasm for us. So much appeared, however: Churches, though proved false (as you had imagined), were still true (as you were to imagine): here was an Artist who could burn you up an old Church, root and branch; and then as the Alchymists professed to do with organic substances in general, distil you an "Astral Spirit" from the ashes, which was the very image of the old burnt article, its airdrawn counterpart,—this you still had, or might get, and draw uses from, if you could. Wait till the Book on the Logos were done;—alas, till your own terrene eyes, blind with conceit and the dust of logic, were purged, subtilised and spiritualised into the sharpness of vision requisite for discerning such an "om-mject."—The ingenuous young English head, of those days, stood strangely puzzled by such revelations; uncertain whether it were getting inspired, or getting infatuated into flat imbecility; and strange effulgence, of new day or else of deeper meteoric night, coloured the horizon of the future for it.

Let me not be unjust to this memorable man. Surely there was here, in his pious, ever-labouring, subtle mind, a precious truth, or prefiguration of truth; and yet a fatal delusion withal. Prefiguration that, in

spite of beaver sciences and temporary spiritual hebetude and cecity, man and his Universe were eternally divine ; and that no past nobleness, or revelation of the divine, could or would ever be lost to him. Most true, surely, and worthy of all acceptance. Good also to do what you can with old Churches and practical Symbols of the Noble ; nay quit not the burnt ruins of them while you find there is still gold to be dug there. But, on the whole, do not think you can, by logical alchymy, distil astral spirits from them ; or if you could, that said astral spirits, or defunct logical phantasms, could serve you in anything. What the light of your mind, which is the direct inspiration of the Almighty, pronounces incredible,—that, in God's name, leave uncredited ; at your peril do not try believing that. No subtlest hocus-pocus of “ reason ” versus “ understanding ” will avail for that feat ;—and it is terribly perilous to try it in these provinces !

The truth is, I now see, Coleridge's talk and speculation was the emblem of himself : in it as in him, a ray of heavenly inspiration struggled, in a tragically ineffectual degree, with the weakness of flesh and blood. He says once, he “ had skirted the howling deserts of Infidelity ; ” this was evident enough : but he had not had the courage, in defiance of pain and terror, to press resolutely across said deserts to the new firm lands of Faith beyond ; he preferred to create logical fatamorganas for himself on this hither side, and laboriously solace himself with these.

To the man himself Nature had given, in high measure, the seeds of a noble endowment ; and to unfold it had been forbidden him. A subtle lynx-eyed intellect, tremulous pious sensibility to all good and all beautiful ; truly a ray of empyrean light ;—but imbedded in such weak laxity of character, in such indolences and esuriences as had made strange work with it. Once more, the tragic story of a high endowment with an insufficient will. An eye to discern the divineness of the Heaven's splendours and lightnings, the insatiable wish to revel in their godlike radiances

and brilliances ; but no heart to front the scathing terrors of them, which is the first condition of your conquering an abiding-place there. The courage necessary for him, above all things, had been denied this man. His life, with such ray of the empyrean in it, was great and terrible to him ; and he had not valiantly grappled with it, he had fled from it ; sought refuge in vague daydreams, hollow compromises, in opium, in theosophic metaphysics. Harsh pain, danger, necessity, slavish harnessed toil, were of all things abhorrent to him. And so the empyrean element, lying smothered under the terrene, and yet inextinguishable there, made sad writhings. For pain, danger, difficulty, steady slaving toil, and other highly disagreeable behests of destiny, shall in no wise be shirked by any brightest mortal that will approve himself loyal to his mission in this world ; nay precisely the higher he is, the deeper will be the disagreeableness, and the detestability to flesh and blood, of the tasks laid on him ; and the heavier too, and more tragic, his penalties if he neglect them.

For the old Eternal powers do live forever ; nor do their laws know any change, however we in our poor wigs and church-tippets may attempt to read their laws. To *steal* into Heaven,—by the modern method, of sticking ostrich-like your head into fallacies on Earth, equally as by the ancient and by all conceivable methods,—is forever forbidden. High-treason is the name of that attempt ; and it continues to be punished as such. Strange enough : here once more was a kind of Heaven-scaling Ixion ; and to him, as to the old one, the just gods were very stern ! The ever-revolving, never-advancing Wheel (of a kind) was his, through life ; and from his Cloud-Juno did not he too procreate strange Centaurs, spectral Puseyisms, monstrous illusory Hybrids, and ecclesiastical Chimeras,—which now roam the earth in a very lamentable manner !

## HISTORY OF FREDERICK THE GREAT

[AFTER finishing *The Life of Sterling* Carlyle sought a new task, casting his eyes about "for a man who could rule." He thought of William the Conqueror, of Luther and of Knox, but his choice finally settled in 1852 on Frederick the Great. He found that to treat of Frederick involved writing the History of Germany, and in some measure of Europe during the eighteenth century. With many groans and lamentations he pursued his labours. "That tremendous book," writes Mrs. Carlyle, "made prolonged and entire devastation of any satisfactory semblance of home life or home happiness." When the first two volumes appeared, she wrote to her husband: "Oh, my dear, what a magnificent book this is going to be, the best of all your books, forcible, clear and sparkling as the *French Revolution*; compact and finished as *Cromwell* . . . and small thanks to it, it has taken a doing." Carlyle's labour was indeed immense. He read every book that he could find on the subject, and visited all the scenes and places he describes. The work occupied upwards of fourteen years, and forms nearly a third part of all that Carlyle has written. The first two volumes of the *History of Friedrich II of Prussia, called Frederick the Great* appeared in September 1858, volume iii. in May 1862, volume iv. in February 1864, and the last two volumes in March 1865. It is a work of superlative genius in which Carlyle's humour, eloquence, characterisation, skill in narrative, and gift for making his readers see the events he describes, are all at their highest. His exaltation of Frederick's character has found many critics and cannot be defended without a great deal of special pleading. Carlyle himself had some doubts of his hero. "I never was admitted much to Friedrich's confidence, and I never cared very much about him," he confessed. No battles have ever been described with such vivid power as Carlyle describes Frederick's. The book was for many years a text-book for German officers, and caused Bismarck to send its author the Prussian Order "*Pour le Mérite*," an honour which he appreciated. The extract describing the battle of Leuthen is long and prevents the inclusion of much which we should like to insert, but it was thought well to sacrifice much in order to give one of Frederick's battle-pieces at some length.]

## I

## FRIEDRICH THEN, AND FRIEDRICH NOW

(BOOK I, CHAPTER I)

ABOUT fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you might have met him elsewhere at an earlier hour, riding or driving in a rapid business manner on the open roads or through the scraggy woods and avenues of that intricate amphibious Potsdam region, a highly interesting lean little old man, of alert though slightly stooping figure; whose name among strangers was King *Friedrich the Second*, or Frederick the Great of Prussia, and at home among the common people, who much loved and esteemed him, was *Vater Fritz*,—Father Fred,—a name of familiarity which had not bred contempt in that instance. [He is a King every inch of him, though without the trappings of a King.] Presents himself in a Spartan simplicity of vesture: no crown but an old military cocked-hat,—generally old, or trampled and kneaded into absolute softness, if new;—no sceptre but one like Agamemnon's, a walking-stick cut from the woods, which serves also as a riding-stick (with which he hits the horse “between the ears,” say authors);—and for royal robes, a mere soldier's blue coat with red facings, coat likely to be old, and sure to have a good deal of Spanish snuff on the breast of it; rest of the apparel dim, unobtrusive in colour or cut, ending in high over-knee military boots, which may be brushed (and, I hope, kept soft with an underhand suspicion of oil), but are not permitted to be blackened or varnished; Day and Martin with their soot-pots forbidden to approach.

The man is not of godlike physiognomy, any more than of imposing stature or costume: close-shut mouth with thin lips, prominent jaws and nose, receding brow, by no means of Olympian height; head, however, is of long form, and has superlative gray eyes in it. Not

what is called a beautiful man ; nor yet, by all appearance, what is called a happy. On the contrary, the face bears evidence of many sorrows, as they are termed, of much hard labour done in this world ; and seems to anticipate nothing but more still coming. Quiet stoicism, capable enough of what joy there were, but not expecting any worth mention ; great unconscious and some conscious pride, well tempered with a cheery mockery of humour,—are written on that old face ; which carries its chin well forward, in spite of the slight stoop about the neck ; snuffy nose rather flung into the air, under its old cocked-hat,—like an old snuffy lion on the watch ; and such a pair of eyes as no man or lion or lynx of that Century bore elsewhere, according to all testimony we have. “Those eyes,” says Mirabeau, “which, at the bidding of his great soul, fascinated you with seduction or with terror (*portaient au gré de son âme héroïque, la séduction ou la terreur*).” Most excellent potent brilliant eyes, swift-darting as the stars, steadfast as the sun ; gray, we said, of the azure-gray colour ; large enough, not of glaring size ; the habitual expression of them vigilance and penetrating sense, rapidity resting on depth. Which is an excellent combination ; and gives us the notion of a lambent outer radiance springing from some great inner sea of light and fire in the man. The voice, if he speak to you, is of similar physiognomy, clear, melodious and sonorous ; all tones are in it, from that of ingenuous inquiry, graceful sociality, light-flowing banter (rather prickly for most part), up to definite word of command, up to desolating word of rebuke and reprobation ; a voice “the clearest and most agreeable in conversation I ever heard,” says witty Dr. Moore. “He speaks a great deal,” continues the Doctor ; “yet those who hear him, regret that he does not speak a good deal more. His observations are always lively, very often just ; and few men possess the talent of repartee in greater perfection.”

Just about threescore and ten years ago,<sup>1</sup> his speakings

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1856,—17th August 1786.

and his workings came to finis in this World of Time ; and he vanished from all eyes into other worlds, leaving much inquiry about him in the minds of men ;—which, as my readers and I may feel too well, is yet by no means satisfied. As to his speech, indeed, though it had the worth just ascribed to it and more, and though masses of it were deliberately put on paper by himself, in prose and verse, and continue to be printed and kept legible, what he spoke has pretty much vanished into the inane ; and except as record or document of what he did, hardly now concerns mankind. But the things he did were extremely remarkable ; and cannot be forgotten by mankind. Indeed they bear such fruit to the present hour as all the Newspapers are obliged to be taking note of, sometimes to an unpleasant degree. Editors vaguely account this man the “Creator of the Prussian Monarchy ;” which has since grown so large in the world, and troublesome to the Editorial mind in this and other countries. He was indeed the first who, in a highly public manner, notified its creation ; announced to all men that it was, in very deed, created ; standing on its feet there, and would go a great way, on the impulse it had got from him and others. As it has accordingly done ; and may still keep doing to lengths little dreamt of by the British Editor in our time ; whose prophesyings upon Prussia, and insights into Prussia, in its past, or present or future, are truly as yet inconsiderable, in proportion to the noise he makes with them ! The more is the pity for him,—and for myself too in the Enterprise now on hand. \* \* \*

This was a man of infinite mark to his contemporaries ; who had witnessed surprising feats from him in the world ; very questionable notions and ways, which he had contrived to maintain against the world and its criticisms. As an original man has always to do ; much more an original ruler of men. The world, in fact, had tried hard to put him down, as it does, unconsciously or consciously, with all such ; and after the most conscious exertions, and at one time a dead-list spasm of all its energies for Seven Years, had not

been able. Principalities and powers, Imperial, Royal, Czarish, Papal, enemies innumerable as the sea-sand, had risen against him, only one helper left among the world's Potentates (and that one only while there should be help rendered in return); and he led them all such a dance as had astonished mankind and them.

No wonder they thought him worthy of notice. Every original man of any magnitude is;—nay, in the longrun, who or what else is? But how much more if your original man was a king over men; whose movements were polar, and carried from day to day those of the world along with them. The Samson Agonistes,—were his life passed like that of Samuel Johnson in dirty garrets, and the produce of it only some bits of written paper,—the Agonistes, and how he will comport himself in the Philistine mill; this is always a spectacle of truly epic and tragic nature. The rather, if your Samson, royal or other, is not yet blinded or subdued to the wheel; much more if he vanquish his enemies, *not* by suicidal methods, but march out at last flourishing his miraculous fighting implement, and leaving their mill and them in quite ruinous circumstances. As this King Friedrich fairly managed to do.

For he left the world all bankrupt, we may say; fallen into bottomless abysses of destruction; he still in a paying condition, and with footing capable to carry his affairs and him. When he died, in 1786, the enormous Phenomenon since called FRENCH REVOLUTION was already growling audibly in the depths of the world; meteoric-electric coruscations heralding it, all round the horizon. Strange enough to note, one of Friedrich's last visitors was Gabriel Honoré Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau. These two saw one another; twice, for half-an-hour each time. The last of the old Gods and the first of the modern Titans;—before Pelion leapt on Ossa; and the foul Earth taking fire at last, its vile mephitic elements went up in volcanic thunder. This also is one of the peculiarities of Friedrich, that he is hitherto the last of the Kings; that he ushers in the French Revolution, and closes an Epoch of World-

History. Finishing off forever the trade of King, think many ; who have grown profoundly dark as to Kingship and him. \* \* \*

Friedrich is by no means one of the perfect demigods ; and there are various things to be said against him with good ground. To the last, a questionable hero ; with much in him which one could have wished not there, and much wanting which one could have wished. But there is one feature which strikes you at an early period of the inquiry, That in his way he is a Reality ; that he always means what he speaks ; grounds his actions, too, on what he recognises for the truth ; and, in short, has nothing whatever of the Hypocrite or Phantasm. Which some readers will admit to be an extremely rare phenomenon.

We perceive that this man was far indeed from trying to deal swindler-like with the facts around him ; that he honestly recognised said facts wherever they disclosed themselves, and was very anxious also to ascertain their existence where still hidden or dubious. For he knew well, to a quite uncommon degree, and with a merit all the higher as it was an unconscious one, how entirely inexorable is the nature of facts, whether recognised or not, ascertained or not ; how vain all cunning of diplomacy, management and sophistry, to save any mortal who does *not* stand on the truth of things, from sinking, in the longrun. Sinking to the very Mudgods, with all his diplomacies, possessions, achievements ; and becoming an unnameable object, hidden deep in the Cesspools of the Universe. This I hope to make manifest ; this which I long ago discerned for myself, with pleasure, in the physiognomy of Friedrich and his life. Which indeed was the first real sanction, and has all along been my inducement and encouragement, to study his life and him. How this man, officially a King withal, comported himself in the Eighteenth Century, and managed *not* to be a Liar and Charlatan as his Century was, deserves to be seen a little by men and kings, and may silently have didactic meanings in it.

## II

## HISTORICAL MEANING OF THE REFORMATION

(BOOK III, CHAPTER VIII)

THE Reformation was the great Event of that Sixteenth Century ; according as a man did something in that, or did nothing and obstructed doing, has he much claim to memory, or no claim, in this age of ours. The more it becomes apparent that the Reformation was the Event then transacting itself, was the thing that Germany and Europe either did or refused to do, the more does the historical significance of men attach itself to the phases of that transaction. Accordingly we notice henceforth that the memorable points of Brandenburg History, what of it sticks naturally to the memory of a reader or student, connect themselves of their own accord, almost all, with the History of the Reformation. That has proved to be the Law of Nature in regard to them, softly establishing itself ; and it is ours to follow that law.

Brandenburg, not at first unanimously, by no means too inconsiderably, but with overwhelming unanimity when the matter became clear, was lucky enough to adopt the Reformation ;—and stands by it ever since in its ever-widening scope, amid such difficulties as there might be. Brandenburg had felt somehow, that it could do no other. And ever onwards through the times even of our little Fritz and farther, if we will understand the word “Reformation,” Brandenburg so feels ; being, at this day, to an honourable degree, incapable of believing incredibilities, of adopting solemn shams, or pretending to live on spiritual moonshine. Which has been of uncountable advantage to Brandenburg :—how could it fail ? This was what we must call obeying the audible voice of Heaven. To which same “voice,” at that time, all that did *not* give ear,—what has become of them since ; have they not signally had the penalties to pay !

“Penalties:” quarrel not with the old phraseology, good reader; attend rather to the thing it means. The word was heard of old, with a right solemn meaning attached to it, from theological pulpits and such places; and may still be heard there with a half meaning, or with no meaning, though it has rather become obsolete to modern ears. But the *thing* should not have fallen obsolete; the thing is a grand and solemn truth, expressive of a silent Law of Heaven, which continues forever valid. The most untheological of men may still assert the thing; and invite all men to notice it, as a silent monition and prophecy in this Universe; to take it, with more of awe than they are wont, as a correct reading of the Will of the Eternal in respect of such matters; and, in their modern sphere, to bear the same well in mind. For it is perfectly certain, and may be seen with eyes in any quarter of Europe at this day.

Protestant or not Protestant? The question meant everywhere: “Is there anything of nobleness in you, O Nation, or is there nothing? Are there, in this Nation, enough of heroic men to venture forward, and to battle for God’s Truth *versus* the Devil’s Falsehood, at the peril of life and more? Men who prefer death, and all else, to living under Falsehood,—who, once for all, will not live under Falsehood; but having drawn the sword against it (the time being come for that rare and important step), throw away the scabbard, and can say, in pious clearness, with their whole soul: “Come on, then! Life under Falsehood is not good for me; and we will try it out now. Let it be to the death between us, then!”

Once risen into this divine white-heat of temper, were it not only for a season and not again, the Nation is thenceforth considerable through all its remaining history. What immensities of *dross* and crypto-poisonous matter will it not burn out of itself in that high temperature, in the course of a few years! Witness Cromwell and his Puritans,—making England habitable even under the Charles-Second terms for a couple of centuries more.

Nations are benefited, I believe, for ages, by being thrown into divine white-heat in this manner. And no Nation that has not had such divine paroxysms at any time is apt to come to much.

That was now, in this epoch, the English of “adopting Protestantism ;” and we need not wonder at the results which it has had, and which the want of it has had. For the want of it is literally the want of loyalty to the Maker of this Universe. He who wants that, what else has he, or can he have ? If you do not, you Man or you Nation, love the Truth enough, but try to make a Chapman-bargain with Truth, instead of giving yourself wholly soul and body and life to her, Truth will not live with you, Truth will depart from you ; and only Logic, “Wit” (for example, “London Wit”), Sophistry, Virtù, the Æsthetic Arts, and perhaps (for a short while) Book-keeping by Double Entry, will abide with you. You will follow falsity, and think it truth, you unfortunate man or nation. You will right surely, you for one, stumble to the Devil ; and are every day and hour, little as you imagine it, making progress thither.

Austria, Spain, Italy, France, Poland,—the offer of the Reformation was made everywhere ; and it is curious to see what has become of the nations that would not hear it. In all countries were some that accepted ; but in many there were not enough, and the rest, slowly or swiftly, with fatal difficult industry, contrived to burn them out. Austria was once full of Protestants ; but the hide-bound Flemish-Spanish Kaiser-element presiding over it, obstinately, for two centuries, kept saying, “No ; we, with our dull obstinate Cimburgis underlip and lazy eyes, with our ponderous Austrian depth of Habituality and indolence of Intellect, we prefer steady Darkness to uncertain new Light !”—and all men may see where Austria now is. Spain still more ; poor Spain, going about, at this time, making its “pronunciamientos ;” all the factious attorneys in its little towns assembling to pronounce virtually this, “The Old

is a lie, then ;—good Heavens, after we so long tried hard, harder than any nation, to think it a truth !—and if it be not Rights of Man, Red Republic and Progress of the Species, we know not what now to believe or to do ; and are as a people stumbling on steep places, in the darkness of midnight !”—They refused Truth when she came ; and now Truth knows nothing of them. All stars, and heavenly lights, have become veiled to such men ; they must now follow terrestrial *ignes fatui*, and think them stars. That is the doom passed upon them.

Italy too had its Protestants ; but Italy killed them ; managed to extinguish Protestantism. Italy put up silently with Practical Lies of all kinds ; and, shrugging its shoulders, preferred going into Dilettantism and the Fine Arts. The Italians, instead of the sacred service of Fact and Performance, did Music, Painting, and the like :—till even that has become impossible for them ; and no noble Nation, sunk from virtue to *virtù*, ever offered such a spectacle before. He that will prefer Dilettantism in this world for his outfit, shall have it ; but all the gods will depart from him ; and manful veracity, earnestness of purpose, devout depth of soul, shall no more be his. He can if he like make himself a soprano, and sing for hire ;—and probably that is the real goal for him.

But the sharpest-cut example is France ; to which we constantly return for illustration. France, with its keen intellect, saw the truth and saw the falsity, in those Protestant times ; and, with its ardour of generous impulse, was prone enough to adopt the former. France was within a hairsbreadth of becoming actually Protestant. But France saw good to massacre Protestantism, and end it in the night of St. Bartholomew 1572. The celestial Apparitor of Heaven's Chancery, so we may speak, the Genius of Fact and Veracity, had left his Writ of Summons ; Writ was read ;—and replied to in this manner. The Genius of Fact and Veracity accordingly withdrew ;—was staved off, got kept away, for two-hundred years. But the Writ of Summons had been served ; Heaven's Messenger could not stay away

forever. No ; he returned duly ; with accounts run up, on compound interest, to the actual hour, in 1792 ;—and then, at last, there had to be a “Protestantism ;” and we know of what kind that was !—

Nations did not so understand it, nor did Brandenburg more than the others ; but the question of questions for them at that time, decisive of their history for half a thousand years to come, was, Will you obey the heavenly voice, or will you not ?

### III

#### FRIEDRICH WILHELM AS A MAN OF GENIUS

(BOOK IV, CHAPTER III)

STRANGE as it sounds in the Republic of Letters, we are tempted to call Friedrich Wilhelm a man of genius ;—genius fated and promoted to work in National Husbandry, not in writing Verses or three-volume Novels. A silent genius. His melodious stanza, which he cannot bear to see halt in any syllable, is a rough fact reduced to order ; fact made to stand firm on its feet, with the world-rocks under it, and looking free towards all the winds and all the stars. He goes about suppressing platitudes, ripping off futilities, turning deceptions inside out. The realm of Disorder, which is Unveracity, Unreality, what we call Chaos, has no fiercer enemy. Honest soul, and he seemed to himself such a stupid fellow often ; no tongue-learning at all ; little capable to give a reason for the faith that was in him. He cannot argue in articulate logic, only in inarticulate bellowings, or worse. He must *do* a thing, leave it undemonstrated ; once done, it will itself tell what kind of thing it is, by and by. Men of genius have a hard time, I perceive, whether born on the throne or off it ; and must expect contradictions next to unendurable,—the plurality of blockheads being so extreme !

I find, except Samuel Johnson, no man of equal veracity

with Friedrich Wilhelm in that epoch : and Johnson too, with all his tongue-learning, had not logic enough. In fact, it depends on how much conviction you have. Blessed be Heaven, there is here and there a man born who loves truth as truth should be loved, with all his heart and all his soul ; and hates untruth with a corresponding perfect hatred. Such men, in polite circles, which understand that certainly truth is better than untruth, but that you must be polite to both, are liable to get to the end of their logic. Even Johnson had a bellow in him ; though Johnson could at any time withdraw into silence, *his* kingdom lying all under his own hat. How much more Friedrich Wilhelm, who had no logic whatever ; and whose kingdom lay without him, far and wide, a thing he could not withdraw from. The rugged Orson, he needed to be right. From utmost Memel down to Wesel again, ranked in a straggling manner round the half-circumference of Europe, all manner of things and persons were depending on him, and on his being right, not wrong, in his notion.

A man of clear discernment, very good natural eyesight ; and irrefragably confident in what his eyes told him, in what his belief was ;—yet of huge simplicity withal. Capable of being coaxed about, and led by the nose, to a strange degree, if there were an artist dextrous enough, daring enough ! His own natural judgment was good, and, though apt to be hasty and headlong, was always likely to come right in the end ; but internally, we may perceive, his modesty, self-distrust, anxiety and other unexpected qualities, must have been great. And then his explosiveness, impatience, excitability ; his conscious dumb ignorance of all things beyond his own small horizon of personal survey ! An Orson capable enough of being coaxed and tickled, by some first-rate conjuror ;—first-rate ; a second-rate might have failed, and got torn to pieces for his pains. But Seckendorf and Grumkow, what a dance they led him on some matters,—as we shall see, and as poor Fritz and others will see !

He was full of sensitiveness, rough as he was and

shaggy of skin. His wild imaginations drove him hither and thither at a sad rate. He ought to have the privileges of genius. His tall Potsdam Regiment, his mad-looking passion for enlisting tall men ; this also seems to me one of the whims of genius,—an exaggerated notion to have his “stanza” polished to the last punctilio of perfection ; and might be paralleled in the history of Poets. Stranger “man of genius,” or in more peculiar circumstances, the world never saw !

Friedrich Wilhelm, in his Crown-Prince days, and now still more when he was himself in the sovereign place, had seen all along, with natural arithmetical intellect, That his strength in this world, as at present situated, would very much depend upon the amount of potential-battle that lay in him,—on the quantity and quality of Soldiers he could maintain, and have ready for the field at any time. A most indisputable truth, and a heartfelt one in the present instance. To augment the quantity, to improve the quality, in this thrice-essential particular : here lay the keystone and crowning summit of all Friedrich Wilhelm’s endeavours ; to which he devoted himself, as only the best Spartan could have done. Of which there will be other opportunities to speak in detail. For it was a thing world-notable, world-laughable, as was then thought ; the extremely serious fruit of which did at length also become notable enough. \* \* \*

Friedrich Wilhelm’s passion for drilling, recruiting and perfecting his army attracted much notice : laughing satirical notice, in the hundred mouths of common rumour, which he regarded little ; and notice iracund and minatory, when it led him into collision with the independent portions of mankind, now and then. This latter sort was not pleasant, and sometimes looked rather serious ; but this too he contrived always to digest in some tolerable manner. He continued drilling and recruiting,—we may say not his Army only, but his Nation in all departments of it,—as no man before or since ever did : increasing, by every devisable method, the amount of potential-battle that lay in him and it.

In a military, and also in a much deeper sense, he may be defined as the great Drill-sergeant of the Prussian Nation. Indeed this had been the function of the Hohenzollerns all along ; this difficult, unpleasant and indispensable one of drilling. From the first appearance of Burggraf Friedrich, with good words and with *Heavy Peg*, in the wreck of anarchic Brandenburg, and downwards ever since, this has steadily enough gone on. And not a little good drilling these populations have had, first and last ; just orders given them (wise and just, which to a respectable degree were Heaven's orders as well) : and certainly *Heavy Peg*, for instance,—*Heavy Peg*, bringing Quitzow's strong House about his ears,—was a respectable drummer's-cat to enforce the same. This has been going on these Three-hundred years. But Friedrich Wilhelm completes the process ; finishes it off to the last perfection. Friedrich Wilhelm carries it through every fibre and cranny of Prussian Business, and so far as possible, of Prussian Life ; so that Prussia is all a drilled phalanx, ready to the word of command ; and what we see in the Army is but the last consummate essence of what exists in the Nation everywhere. That was Friedrich Wilhelm's function, made ready for him, laid to his hand by his Hohenzollern foregoers ; and indeed it proved a most beneficent function.

## IV

## THE TOBACCO PARLIAMENT

(BOOK V, CHAPTER VII)

FRIEDRICH WILHELM, though an absolute Monarch, does not dream of governing without Law, still less without Justice, which he knows well to be the one basis for him and for all Kings and men. His life-effort, prosecuted in a grand, unconscious, unwavering and instinctive way, may be defined, rather as the effort to find out everywhere in his affairs what was justice ; to

make regulations, laws in conformity with that, and to guide himself and his Prussia rigorously by these. Truly he is not of constitutional turn ; cares little about the wigs and formalities of justice, pressing on so fiercely towards the essence and fact of it ; he has been known to tear asunder the wigs and formalities, in a notably impatient manner, when they stood between him and the fact. But Prussia has its Laws withal, tolerably abundant, tolerably fixed and supreme : and the meanest Prussian man that could find out a definite Law, coming athwart Friedrich Wilhelm's wrath, would check Friedrich Wilhelm in mid-volley,—or hope with good ground to do it. Hope, we say ; for the King is in his own and his people's eyes, to some indefinite extent, always himself the supreme ultimate Interpreter, and grand living codex, of the Laws,—always to some indefinite extent ;—and there remains for a subject man nothing but the appeal to *Philip sober*, in some rash cases ! On the whole, however, Friedrich Wilhelm is by no means a lawless Monarch ; nor are his Prussians slaves by any means : they are patient, stout-hearted, subject men, with a very considerable quantity of radical fire, very well covered in ; prevented from idle explosions, bound to a respectful demeanour, and especially to hold their tongues as much as possible.

Friedrich Wilhelm has not the least shadow of a Constitutional Parliament, nor even a Privy-Council, as we understand it ; his Ministers being in general mere Clerks to register and execute what he had otherwise resolved upon : but he had his *Tabaks-Collegium*, Tobacco-College, Smoking Congress, *Tabagie*, which has made so much noise in the world, and which, in a rough natural way, affords him the uses of a Parliament, on most cheap terms, and without the formidable inconveniences attached to that kind of Institution. A Parliament reduced to its simplest expression, and, instead of Parliamentary eloquence, provided with Dutch claypipes and tobacco : so we may define this celebrated *Tabagie* of Friedrich Wilhelm's. \* \* \*

To ascertain what the true course in regard to this or

the other high matter will be ; what the public will think of it ; and, in short, what and how the Executive-Royal shall *do* therein : this, the essential function of a Parliament and Privy-Council, was here, by artless cheap methods, under the bidding of mere Nature, multifariously done : mere taciturnity and sedative smoke making the most of what natural intellect there might be. The substitution of Tobacco-smoke for Parliamentary eloquence is, by some, held to be a great improvement. Here is Smelfungus's opinion, quaintly expressed, with a smile in it, which perhaps is not all of joy :

“ Tobacco-smoke is the one element in which, by our European manners, men can sit silent together without embarrassment, and where no man is bound to speak one word more than he has actually and veritably got to say. Nay, rather every man is admonished and enjoined by the laws of honour, and even of personal ease, to stop short of that point ; at all events, to hold his peace and take to his pipe again, the instant he *has* spoken his meaning, if he chance to have any. The results of which salutary practice, if introduced into Constitutional Parliaments, might evidently be incalculable. The essence of what little intellect and insight there is in that room : we shall or can get nothing more out of any Parliament ; and sedative, gently-soothing, gently-clarifying tobacco-smoke (if the room were well ventilated, open atop, and the air kept good), with the obligation to a *minimum* of speech, surely gives human intellect and insight the best chance they can have. Best chance, instead of the worst chance as at present : ah me, ah me, who will reduce fools to silence again in any measure ? Who will deliver men from this hideous nightmare of Stump-Oratory, under which the grandest Nations are choking to a nameless death, bleeding (too truly) from mouth and nose and ears, in our sad days ? ” \* \* \*

This Smoking Parliament or *Tubaks-Collegium* of his

Prussian Majesty was a thing much talked of in the world ; but till Seckendorf and Grumkow started their grand operations there, its proceedings are not on record ; nor indeed till then had its political or parliamentary function become so decidedly evident. It was originally a simple Smoking-Club ; got together on heat of Nature, without ulterior intentions :—thus English *Parliamenta* themselves are understood to have been, in the old Norman time, mere royal Christmas-Festivities, with natural colloquy or *parleying* between King and Nobles ensuing thereupon, and what wisest consultation concerning the arduous things of the realm the circumstances gave rise to. Such parleyings or consultations, —always two in number in regard to every matter, it would seem, or even three ; one sober, one drunk, and one just after being drunk,—proving of extreme service in practice, grew to be Parliament, with its three readings, and what not.

A Smoking-room,—with wooden furniture, we can suppose,—in each of his Majesty's royal Palaces, was set apart for this evening service, and became the Tabagie of his Majesty. A Tabagie-room in the Berlin Schloss, another in the Potsdam, if the cicerone had any knowledge, could still be pointed out :—but the Tobacco-pipes that are shown as Friedrich Wilhelm's in the *Kunstкаммер* or Museum of Berlin, pipes which no rational smoker, not compelled to it, would have used, awaken just doubt as to the cicerones ; and you leave the Locality of the Tabagie a thing conjectural. In summer season, at Potsdam and in country situations, Tabagie could be held under a tent : we expressly know, his Majesty held Tabagie at Wusterhausen nightly on the Steps of the big Fountain, in the Outer Court there. Issuing from Wusterhausen Schloss, and its little clipped lindens, by the western side ; passing the sentries, bridge and black ditch, with live Prussian eagles, vicious black bears, you come upon the royal Tabagie of Wusterhausen ; covered by an awning, I should think ; sending forth its bits of smoke-clouds, and its hum of human talk, into the wide free Desert round.

Any room that was large enough, and had height of ceiling, and air-circulation and no cloth-furniture, would do : and in each Palace is one, or more than one, that has been fixed upon and fitted out for that object.

A high large Room, as the Engravings (mostly worthless) give it us : contented saturnine human figures, a dozen or so of them, sitting round a large long Table, furnished for the occasion ; long Dutch pipe in the mouth of each man ; supplies of knaster easily accessible ; small pan of burning peat, in the Dutch fashion (sandy native charcoal, which burns slowly without smoke), is at your left hand ; at your right a jug, which I find to consist of excellent thin bitter beer. Other costlier materials for drinking, if you want such, are not beyond reach. On side-tables stand wholesome cold-meats, royal rounds of beef not wanting, with bread thinly sliced and buttered : in a rustic but neat and abundant way, such innocent accommodations, narcotic or nutritious, gaseous, fluid and solid, as human nature, bent on contemplation and an evening lounge, can require. Perfect equality is to be the rule ; no rising, or notice taken, when anybody enters or leaves. Let the entering man take his place and pipe, without obligatory remarks : if he cannot smoke, which is Seckendorf's case for instance, let him at least affect to do so, and not ruffle the established stream of things. And so, Puff, slowly Pff !—and any comfortable speech that is in you ; or none, if you authentically have not any.

Old official gentlemen, military for most part ; Grumkow, Derschau, Old Dessauer (when at hand), Seckendorf, old General Flans (rugged Platt-Deutsch specimen, capable of *tocadille* or backgammon, capable of rough slashes of sarcasm when he opens his old beard for speech) : these, and the like of these, intimate confidants of the King, men who could speak a little, or who could be socially silent otherwise,—seem to have been the staple of the Institution. Strangers of mark, who happened to be passing, were occasional guests ; Ginckel the Dutch Ambassador, though foreign like

Seckendorf, was well seen there ; garrulous Pöllnitz, who has wandered over all the world, has a standing invitation. Kings, high Princes on visit, were sure to have the honour. The Crown-Prince, now and afterwards, was often present ; oftener than he liked,—in such an atmosphere, in such an element. “The little Princes were all wont to come in,” doffing their bits of triangular hats, “and bid Papa goodnight. One of the old Generals would sometimes put them through their exercise ; and the little creatures were unwilling to go away to bed.”

In such Assemblage, when business of importance, foreign or domestic, was not occupying the royal thoughts,—the Talk, we can believe, was rambling and multifarious : the day’s hunting, if at Wusterhausen ; the day’s news, if at Berlin or Potsdam ; old reminiscences, too, I can fancy, turning up, and talk, even in Seckendorf’s own time, about Siege of Menin (where your Majesty first did me the honour of some notice), Siege of Stralsund, and—duly on September 11th at least—Malplaquet, with Marlborough and Eugene : what Marlborough said, looked : and especially Lottum, late Feldmarschall Lottum ; and how the Prussian Infantry held firm, like a wall of rocks, when the horse were swept away,—rocks highly volcanic, and capable of rolling forward too ; and “how a certain Adjutant” (Derschau smokes harder, and blushes brown) “snatched poor Tettau on his back, bleeding to death, amid the iron whirlwinds, and brought him out of shot-range.”—“Hm, na, such a Day, that, Herr Feldzeugmeister, as we shall not see again till the Last of the Days !”

Failing talk, there were Newspapers in abundance ; scraggy Dutch Courants, Journals of the Rhine, *Famas*, Frankfurt *Zeitung*s ; with with his Majesty exuberantly supplied himself ;—being willing to know what was passing in the high places of the world, or even what in the dark snuffy Editor’s thoughts were passing. This kind of matter, as some picture of the actual hour, his Majesty liked to have read to him, even during meal-

time. Some subordinate character, with clear windpipe, —all the better too, if he be a bookman, cognisant of History, Geography, and can explain everything—usually reads the Newspaper from some high seat behind backs, while his Majesty and Household dine. The same subordinate personage may be worth his place in the Tabagie, should his function happen to prove necessary there. Even book-men, though generally pedants and mere bags of wind and folly, are good for something, more especially if rich mines of quizzability turn out to be workable in them.

## V

## DEATH OF FRIEDRICH WILHELM

(BOOK X, CHAPTER VIII)

Poor Friedrich Wilhelm is in truth very ill; tosses about all day, in and out of bed,—bed and wheeled-chair drearily alternating;—suffers much; and again, in Diplomatic circles, the rumours are ripe and sinister. Ever from this chill at Schulenburg's the medicines did him no good, says Pöllnitz: if he rallied, it was the effect of Nature, and only temporary. He does daily, with punctuality, his Official business; perhaps the best two hours he has of the four-and-twenty, for the time hangs heavy on him. His old Generals sit round his bed, talking, smoking, as it was five years ago; his Feekin and his Children much about him, out and in: the heavy-laden, weary hours roll round as they can. In general there is a kind of constant Tabaks-Collegium, old Flans, Camas, Hacke, Pöllnitz, Derschau, and the rest by turns always there; the royal Patient cannot be left alone, without faces he likes: other Generals, estimable in their way, have a physiognomy displeasing to the sick man; and will smart for it if they enter,—“At sight of *him* every pain grows painfuler!”—the poor King being of poetic temperament, as we often

say. Friends are encouraged to smoke, especially to keep up a stream of talk; if at any time he fall into a doze and they cease talking, the silence will awaken him.

He is worst-off in the night; sleep very bad: and among his sore bodily pains, ennui falls very heavy to a mind so restless. He can paint, he can whittle, chisel: at last they even mount him a table, in his bed, with joiner's tools, mallets, gluepots, where he makes small carpentry,—the talk to go on the while;—often at night is the sound of his mallet audible in the Palace Esplanade; and Berlin townsfolk pause to listen, with many thoughts of a sympathetic or at least inarticulate character: “*Hm, Weh, Ihr Majestät: ach Gott, pale Death knocks with impartial foot at the huts of poor men and the Palaces of Kings!*”<sup>1</sup>—Reverend Herr Roloff, whom they call Provost (*Probst*, Chief Clergyman) Roloff, a pious honest man and preacher, he, I could guess, has already been giving spiritual counsel now and then; later interviews with Roloff are expressly on record: for it is the King's private thought, ever and anon borne in upon him, that death itself is in this business. \* \* \*

With the bright Spring weather he seemed to revive; towards the end of April he resolved for Potsdam, everybody thinking him much better, and the outer Public reckoning the crisis of the illness over. He himself knew other. It was on the 27th of the month that he went; he said, “Fare thee well, then, Berlin; I am to die in Potsdam, then (*ich werde in Potsdam sterben*)!” The May-flowers came late; the weather was changeful, ungenial for the sick man: this winter of 1740 had been the coldest on record; it extended itself into the very summer; and brought great distress of every kind; of which some oral rumour still survives in all countries. Friedrich Wilhelm heard complaints of scarcity among the people; admonitions to open his Corn-granaries (such as he always has in store against that kind of accident); but he still hesitated and

<sup>1</sup> Pöllnitz, ii. 539.

refused ; unable to look into it himself, and fearing deceptions. \* \* \*

On Thursday 26th of May, an express from Eller, or the Potsdam friends, arrives at Reinsberg : He (the Crown Prince) is to come quickly, if he would see his Father again alive ! The step may have danger, too ; but Friedrich, a world of feelings urging him, is on the road next morning before the sun. His journey may be fancied ; the like of it falls to all men. Arriving at last, turning hastily a corner of the Potsdam Schloss, Friedrich sees some gathering in the distance : it is his Father in his *rollwagen* (wheeled-chair),—not dying ; but out of doors, giving orders about founding a House, or seeing it done. House for one Philips, a crabbed Englishman he has ; whose tongue is none of the best, not even to Majesty itself, but whose merits as a Groom, of English and other Horses, are without parallel in those parts. Without parallel, and deserve a House before we die. Let us see it set agoing, this blessed May-day ! Of Philips, who survived deep into Friedrich's time, and uttered rough sayings (in mixed intelligible dialect) when put upon in his grooming, or otherwise disturbed, I could obtain no farther account : the man did not care to be put in History (a very small service to a man) ; cared to have a house with trim fittings, and to do his grooming well, the fortunate Philips.

At sight of his Son, Friedrich Wilhelm threw out his arms ; the Son kneeling sank upon his breast, and they embraced with tears. My Father, my Father ; My Son, my Son ! It was a scene to make all bystanders and even Philips weep.—Probably the emotion hurt the old King ; he had to be taken in again straightway, his show of strength suddenly gone, and bed the only place for him. This same Friday he dictated to one of his Ministers (Boden, who was in close attendance) the Instruction for his Funeral ; a rude characteristic Piece, which perhaps the English reader knows. Too long and rude for reprinting here.

He is to be buried in his uniform, the Potsdam Gren-

diers his escort ; with military decorum, three volleys fired (and take care they be well fired, “*nicht plackeren*”), so many cannon salvos ;—and no fuss or flaunting ceremony : simplicity and decency is what the tenant of that oak coffin wants, as he always did when owner of wider dominions. The coffin, which he has ready and beside him in the Palace this good while, is a stout piece of carpentry, with leather straps and other improvements ; he views it from time to time ; solaces his truculent imagination with the look of it : “I shall sleep right well *there*,” he would say. The image he has of his Burial, we perceive, is of perfect visuality, equal to what a Defoe could do in imagining. All is seen, settled to the last minuteness : the coffin is to be borne out by so and so, at such and such a door ; this detachment is to fall in here, that there, in the attitude of “cover arms” (musket inverted under left arm) ; and the band is to play, with all its blackamoors, *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* (O Head, all bleeding wounded) ; a Dirge his Majesty had liked, who knew music, and had a love for it, after his sort. Good Son of Nature : a dumb Poet, as I say always ; most dumb, but real ; the value of him great, and unknown in these babbling times. It was on this same Friday night that Cochius was first sent for ; Cochius, and Oesfeld with him, “about nine o’clock.”

For the next three days (Saturday to Monday), when his cough and many sufferings would permit him, Friedrich Wilhelm had long private dialogues with his Son ; instructing him, as was evident, in the mysteries of State ; in what knowledge, as to persons and to things, he reckoned might be usefulest to him. What the lessons were, we know not ; the way of taking them had given pleasure to the old man : he was heard to say, perhaps more than once, when the Generals were called in, and the dialogue interrupted for a while : “Am not I happy to have such a Son to leave behind me !” And the grimly sympathetic Generals testified assent ; endeavoured to talk a little, could at least smoke, and look friendly ; till the King gathered

strength for continuing his instructions to his Successor. All else was as if settled with him ; this had still remained to do. This once done (finished, Monday night), why not abdicate altogether ; and die disengaged, be it in a day or in a month, since that is now the one work left ? Friedrich Wilhelm does so purpose.

His state, now as all along, was fluctuating, uncertain, restless. He was heard murmuring prayers ; he would say sometimes, " Pray for me ; *Betet, betet.*" And more than once, in deep tone, " Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified ! " The wild Son of Nature, looking into Life and Death, into Judgment and Eternity, finds that these things are very great. This too is a characteristic trait : In a certain German Hymn (*Why fret or murmur, then ?* the title of it), which they often sang to him, or along with him, as he much loved it, are these words, " Naked I came into the world, and naked shall I go,"—" No," said he, " always with vivacity," at this passage ; " not quite naked, I shall have my uniform on :" Let us be exact, since we are at it ! After which the singing proceeded again. " The late Graf Alexander von Wartenberg,"—Captain Wartenberg, whom we know, and whose opportunities,—" was wont to relate this."

Tuesday 31st May, " about one in the morning," Cochius was again sent for. He found the King in very pious mood, but in great distress, and afraid he might yet have much pain to suffer. Cochius prayed with him ; talked piously. " I can remember nothing," said the King ; " I cannot pray, I have forgotten all my prayers."—" Prayer is not in words, but in the thought of the heart," said Cochius ; and soothed the heavy-laden man as he could. " Fare you well," said Friedrich Wilhelm, at length ; " most likely we shall not meet again in this world." Whereat Cochius burst into tears, and withdrew. About four, the King was again out of bed ; wished to see his youngest Boy, who had been ill of measles, but was doing well : " Poor little Ferdinand, adieu, then, my little child !" This is

the Father of that fine Louis Ferdinand, who was killed at Jena ; concerning whom Berlin, in certain emancipated circles of it, still speaks with regret. He, the Louis Ferdinand, had fine qualities ; but went far a-roving, into radicalism, into romantic love, into champagne ; and was cut-down on the threshold of Jena, desperately fighting,—perhaps happily for him. \* \* \*

Friedrich Wilhelm has himself rolled into Queen Sophie's room. “ Feekin, O my Feekin, thou must rise this day, and help me what thou canst. This day I am going to die ; thou wilt be with me this day ! ” The good Wife rises : I know not that it was the first time she had been so called ; but it did prove the last. \* \* \*

Ups and downs there still were ; sore fluctuating labour, as the poor King struggles to his final rest, this morning. He was at the window again, when the *Wacht-parade* (Grenadiers on Guard) turned out ; he saw them make their evolutions for the last time. After which, new relapse, new fluctuation. It was about eleven o'clock, when Cochius was again sent for. The King lay speechless, seemingly still conscious, in bed ; Cochius prays with fervour, in a loud tone, that the dying King may hear and join. “ Not so loud ! ” says the King, rallying a little. He had remembered that it was the season when his servants got their new liveries ; they had been ordered to appear this day in full new costume : “ O vanity ! O vanity ! ” said Friedrich Wilhelm, at sight of the ornamented plush. “ Pray for me, pray for me ; my trust is in the Saviour ! ” he often said. His pains, his weakness are great ; the cordage of a most tough heart rending itself piece by piece. At one time, he called for a mirror : that is certain :—rugged wild man, son of Nature to the last. The mirror was brought ; what he said at sight of his face is variously reported : “ Not so worn out as I thought,” is Pöllnitz's account, and the likeliest ;—though perhaps he said several things, “ ugly face,” “ as good as dead already ; ” and continued the inspection for some moments. A grim, strange thing.

"Feel my pulse, Pitsch," said he, noticing the Surgeon of his Giants: "tell me how long this will last."—"Alas, not long," answered Pitsch.—"Say not, alas; but how do you (He) know?"—"The pulse is gone!"—"Impossible," said he, lifting his arm: "how could I move my fingers so, if the pulse were gone?" Pitsch looked mournfully steadfast. "Herr Jesu, to thee I live; Herr Jesu, to thee I die; in life and in death thou art my gain (*Du bist mein Gewinn*)."<sup>1</sup> These were the last words Friedrich Wilhelm spoke in this world. He again fell into a faint. Eller gave a signal to the Crown-Prince to take the Queen away. Scarcely were they out of the room, when the faint had deepened into death; and Friedrich Wilhelm, at rest from all his labours, slept with the primeval sons of Thor. \* \* \*

On Saturday 4th June, the king's body is laid out in state; all Potsdam at liberty to come and see. He lies there, in his regimentals, in his oaken coffin, on a raised place in the middle of the room; decent mortuary draperies, lamps, garlands, banderols furnishing the room and him: at his feet, on a black velvet *tabouret* (stool), are the chivalry emblems, helmet, gauntlets, spurs; and on similar stools, at the right hand and the left, lie his military insignia, hat and sash, sword, guidon, and what else is fit. Around, in silence, sit nine veteran military dignitaries; Buddenbrook, Waldau, Derschau, Einsiedel, and five others whom we omit to name. Silent they sit. A grim earnest sight in the shine of the lamplight, as you pass out of the June sun. Many went, all day; looked once again on the face that was to vanish. Precisely at ten at night, the coffin-lid is screwed down: Twelve Potsdam Captains take the coffin on their shoulders; Four-and-twenty Corporals with wax torches, Four-and-twenty Sergeants with inverted halberts lowered; certain Generals on order, and very many following as volunteers; these perform the actual burial,—carry the body to the Garrison Church, where are clergy waiting, which is but a small step off; see it lodged, oak coffin and all, in a marble coffin in the side vault there, which is known to Tourists. It is the

end of the week, and the actual burial is done,—hastened forward for reasons we can guess.

Filial piety by no means intends to defraud a loved Father of the Spartan ceremonial contemplated as obsequies by him: very far from it. Filial piety will conform to that with rigour; only adding what musical and other splendours are possible, to testify his love still more. And so, almost three weeks hence, on the 23d of the month, with the aid of Dresden Artists, of Latin Cantatas, and other pomps (not inexcusable, though somewhat out of keeping), the due Funeral is done, no Corpse but a Wax Effigy present in it;—and in all points, that of the Potsdam Grenadiers not forgotten, there was rigorous conformity to the Instruction left. In all points, even to the extensive funeral dinner, and drinking of the appointed cask of wine, “the best cask in my cellar.” Adieu, O King.

The Potsdam Grenadiers fired their three volleys (not “placking,” as I have reason to believe, but well); got their allowance, dinner-liquor, and appointed coin of money: it was the last service required of them in this world. That same night they were dissolved, the whole Four Thousand of them, at a stroke; and ceased to exist as Potsdam Grenadiers. Colonels, Captains, all the Officers known to be of merit, were advanced, at least transferred. Of the common men, a minority, of not inhuman height and of worth otherwise, were formed into a new Regiment on the common terms: the stupid splay-footed eight-feet mass were allowed to stalk off whither they pleased, or vegetate on frugal pensions; Irish Kirkman, and a few others neither knock-kneed nor without head, were appointed *heyducs*, that is, porters to the King’s or other Palaces; and did that duty in what was considered an ornamental manner.

Here are still two things capable of being fished-up from the sea of nugatory matter; and meditated on by readers, till the following Books open.

The last breath of Friedrich Wilhelm having fled, Friedrich hurried to a private room; sat there all in

tears ; looking back through the gulfs of the Past, upon such a Father now rapt away forever. Sad all, and soft in the moonlight of memory,—the lost Loved One all in the right as we now see, we all in the wrong !—This, it appears, was the Son's fixed opinion. Seven years hence, here is how Friedrich concludes the *History* of his Father, written with a loyal admiration throughout ; “We have left under silence the domestic chagrins of this great Prince : readers must have some indulgence for the faults of the Children, in consideration of the virtues of such a Father.” All in tears he sits at present, meditating these sad things.

In a little while the Old Dessauer, about to leave for Dessau, ventures in to the Crown-Prince, Crown-Prince no longer ; “embraces his knees ;” offers, weeping, his condolence, his congratulation ;—hopes withal that his sons and he will be continued in their old posts, and that he, the Old Dessauer, “will have the same authority as in the late reign.” Friedrich’s eyes, at this last clause, flash-out tearless, strangely Olympian. “In your posts I have no thought of making change : in your posts, yes ;—and as to authority, I know of none there can be but what resides in the King that is sovereign !” Which, as it were, struck the breath out of the Old Dessauer ; and sent him home with a painful miscellany of feelings, astonishment not wanting among them.

At an after hour, the same night, Friedrich went to Berlin ; met by acclamation enough. He slept there, not without tumult of dreams, one may fancy ; and on awakening next morning, the first sound he heard was that of the Regiment Glasenap under his windows, swearing fealty to the new King. He sprang out of bed in a tempest of emotion ; bustled distractedly to and fro, wildly weeping. Pöllnitz, who came into the anteroom, found him in this state, “half-dressed, with dishevelled hair, in tears, and as if beside himself.” “These huzzahings only tell me what I have lost !” said the new King.—“He was in great suffering,” suggested Pöllnitz ; “he is now at rest.” “True, he suffered ; but he was here with us : and now— !”

## VI

## GLOGAU

(BOOK XII, CHAPTER IX)

WITHOUT plans of Glogau, and more detail and study than the reader would consent to, there can no Narrative be given. Glogau has Ramparts, due Ring-fence, palisaded and repaired by Wallis; inside of this is an old Town-Wall, which will need petards: there are about 1,000 men under Wallis, and altogether on the works, not to count a mortar or two, fifty-eight big guns. The reader must conceive a poor Town under blockade, in the wintry night-time, with its tough Count Wallis; ill-off for the necessaries of life; Town shrouded in darkness, and creeping quietly to its bed. This on the one hand: and on the other hand, Prussian battalions marching up, at 10 o'clock or later, with the utmost softness of step; "taking post behind the ordinary field-watches;" and at length, all standing ranked, in the invisible dark; silent, like machinery, like a sleeping avalanche: Husht!—No sentry from the walls dreams of such a thing. "Twelve!" sings out the steeple of Glogau; and in grim whisper the word is, "*Vorwärts!*" and the three-winged avalanche is in motion.

They reach their glacises, their ditches, covered ways, correct as mathematics; tear-out chevaux-de-frise, hew-down palisades, in the given number of minutes: Swift, ye Regiment's-carpenters; smite your best! Four cannon-shot do now boom-out upon them; which go high over their heads, little dreaming how close at hand they are. The glacis is thirty feet high, of stiff slope, and slippery with frost: no matter, the avalanche, led on by Leopold in person, by Margraf Karl the King's Cousin, by Adjutant Goltz and the chief personages, rushes up with strange impetus; hews-down a second palisade; surges in;—Wallis's sentries extinct, or driven to their main guards. There is a singular fire in

the besieging party. For example, Four Grenadiers,—I think of this First Column, which succeeded sooner, certainly of the Regiment Glasenapp,—four grenadiers, owing to slippery or other accidents, in climbing the glacis, had fallen a few steps behind the general body; and on getting to the top, took the wrong course, and rushed along rightward instead of leftward. Rightward, the first thing they come upon is a mass of Austrians still ranked in arms; Fifty-two men, as it turned out, with their Captain over them. Slight stutter ensues on the part of the Four Grenadiers; but they give one another the hint, and dash forward: “Prisoners?” ask they sternly, as if all Prussia had been at their rear. The Fifty-two, in the darkness, in the danger and alarm, answer “Yes.”—“Pile arms, then!” Three of the grenadiers stand to see that done; the fourth runs off for force, and happily gets back with it before the comedy had become tragic for his comrades. “I must make acquaintance with these four men,” writes Friedrich, on hearing of it; and he did reward them by present, by promotion to sergeantcy (to ensigncy one of them), or what else they were fit for. Grenadiers of Glasenapp: these are the men Friedrich heard swearing-in under his window, one memorable morning when he burst into tears! At half-past Twelve, the Ramparts, on all sides, are ours.

The Gates of the Town, under axe and petard, can make little resistance to Leopold’s Column or the other two. A hole is soon cut in the Town-Gate, where Leopold is; and gallant Wallis, who had rallied behind it, with his Artillery-General and what they could get together, fires through the opening, kills four men; but is then (by order, and not till then) fired upon, and obliged to draw back, with his Artillery-General mortally hurt. Inside he attempts another rally, some 200 with him; and here and there perhaps a house-window tries to give shot; but it is to no purpose, not the least stand can be made. Poor Wallis is rapidly swept back, into the Market-place, in the Main Guardhouse; and there piles arms: “Glogau yours, Ihr Herren, and we

prisoners of War!" The steeple had not yet quite struck One. Here has been a good hour's-work!

Glogau, as in a dream, or half-awake, and timidly peeping from behind window-curtains, finds that it is a Town taken. Glogau easily consoles itself, I hear, or even is generally glad; Prussian discipline being so perfect, and ingress now free for the necessities of life. There was no plundering: not the least insult: no townsman was hurt; not even in houses where soldiers had tried firing from windows. The Prussian Battalions rendezvous in the Market-place, and go peaceably about their patrolling, and other business; and meddle with nothing else. They lost, in killed, ten men; had of killed and wounded, forty-eight; the Austrians rather more. Wallis was to have been set free on parole; but was not,—in retaliation for some severity of General Browne's in the interim (picking-up of two Silesian Noblemen, suspected of Prussian tendency, and locking them in Brünn over the Hills),—and had to go to Berlin, till that was repaired. To the wounded Artillery-General there was every tenderness shown, but he died in few days. The other Prisoners were marched to the Cüstrin-Stettin quarter; "and many of them took Prussian service."

And this is the Scalade of Glogau: a shining feat of those days; which had great rumour in the Gazettes, and over all the then feverish Nations, though it has now fallen dim again, as feats do. Its importance at that time, its utility to Friedrich's affairs, was undeniable; and it filled Friedrich with the highest satisfaction, and with admiration to overflowing. Done 9th March 1741; in one hour, the very earliest of the day.

## VII

### BATTLE OF LEUTHEN

(BOOK XVIII, CHAPTER X)

FROM Neumarkt, on Monday, long before day, the Prussians, all but a small party left there to guard the

Bakery and Army Properties, are out again ; in four columns ; towards what may lie ahead. Friedrich, as usual in such cases, for obvious reasons, rides with the vanguard. To Borne, the first Village on the Highway, is some seven or eight miles. The air is damp, the dim incipiences of dawn struggling among haze ; a little way on this side Borne, we come on ranks of cavalry drawn across the Highway, stretching right and left into the dim void : Austrian Army this, then ? Push up to it ; see what it is, at least.

It proves to be poor General Nostitz, with his three Saxon regiments of dragoons, famous since Kolin day, and a couple of Hussar regiments, standing here as outpost ;—who ought to have been more alert ; but they could not see through the dark, and so, instead of catching, are caught. The Prussians fall upon them, front and flank, tumble them into immediate wreck ; drive the whole outpost at full gallop home, through Borne, upon Nypern and the right wing,—without news except of this symbolical sort. Saxon regiments are quite ruined, “ 540 of them prisoners ” (poor Nostitz himself not prisoner, but wounded to death) ; and the ground clear in this quarter.

Friedrich, on the farther side of Borne, calls halt, till the main body arrive ; rides forward, himself and staff, to the highest of a range or suite of knolls, some furlongs ahead ; sees there in full view, far and wide, the Austrians drawn up before him. From Nypern to Sagschütz yonder ; miles in length ; and so distinct, while the light mended and the hazes faded, “ that you could have counted them ” (through your glasses), “ man by man.” A highly interesting sight to Friedrich ; who continues there in the profoundest study, and calls up some horse regiments of the vanguard to maintain this Height and the range of Heights running south from it. And there, I think, the King is mainly to be found, looking now at the Austrians, now at his own people, for some three hours to come. His plan of Battle is soon clear to him : Nypern, with its bogs and scrags, on the Austrian right wing, is tortuous impossible

ground, as he well remembers, no good prospect for us there: better ground for us on their left yonder, at Leuthen, even at Sagschütz farther south, whither they are stretching themselves. Attempt their left wing; try our "Oblique Order" upon that, with all the skill that is in us; perhaps we can do it rightly this time, and prosper accordingly! That is Friedrich's plan of action. The four columns once got to Borne, shall fall into two; turn to the right, and go southward, ever southward:—they are to become our two Lines of Battle, were they once got to the right point southward. Well opposite Sagschütz, that will be the point for facing to left, and marching up,—in "Oblique Order," with the utmost faculty they have! \* \* \*

The four columns rustled themselves into two, and turned southward on the two sides of Borne;—southward henceforth, for about two hours; as if straight towards the Magic Mountain, the Zobtenberg, far off, which is conspicuous over all that region. Their steadiness, their swiftness and exactitude were unsurpassable. "It was a beautiful sight," says Tempelhof, an eyewitness: "The heads of the columns were constantly on the same level, and at the distance necessary for forming; all flowed on exact, as if in a review. And you could read in the eyes of our brave troops the noble temper they were in." I know not at what point of their course, or for how long, but it was from the column nearest him, which is to be first line, that the King heard, borne on the winds amid their field-music, as they marched there, the sound of Psalms,—many-voiced melody of a Church Hymn, well known to him; which had broken out, band accompanying, among those otherwise silent men. The fact is very certain, very strange to me: details not very precise, except that here, as specimen, is a verse of their Hymn:

"Grant that with zeal and skill, this day, I do  
 What me to do behoves, what thou command'st me to;  
 Grant that I do it sharp, at point of moment fit,  
 And when I do it, grant me good success in it."

*“ Gieb dass ich thu’ mit Fleiss was mir zu thun gebühret,  
Wozu mich dein Befahl in meinem Stande führet,  
Gieb dass ich’s thue bald, zu der Zeit da ich’s soll;  
Und wenn ich’s thu’, so gieb dass es gerathe wohl.”*

One has heard the voice of waters, one has paused in the mountains at the voice of far-off Covenanter psalms; but a voice like this, breaking the commanded silences, one has not heard. “ Shall we order that to cease, your Majesty ? ” “ By no means,” said the King; whose hard heart seems to have been touched by it, as might well be. Indeed there is in him, in whose grim days, a tone as of trust in the Eternal, as of real religious piety and faith, scarcely noticeable elsewhere in his History. His religion, and he had in withered forms a good deal of it, if we will look well, being almost always in a strictly voiceless state,—nay, ultra-voiceless, or voiced the wrong way, as is too well known. “ By no means ! ” answered he: and a moment after, said to some one, Ziethen probably: “ With men like these, don’t you think I shall have victory this day ! ”

The loss of their Saxon Forepost proved more important to the Austrians than it seemed;—not computable in prisoners, or killed and wounded. The Height named Scheuberg,—“ Borne Rise ” (so we might call it, which has got its Pillar of memorial since, with gilt Victory atop);—where Friedrich now is and where the Austrians are not, is at once a screen and a point of vision to Friedrich. By loss of their Nostitz Forepost, they had lost view of Friedrich, and never could recover view of him; could not for hours learn distinctly what he was about; and when he did come in sight again, it was in a most unexpected place ! On the farther side of Borne, edge of the big expanse of open country there, Friedrich has halted; ridden with his adjutants to the top of “ the Scheuberg (Shy-hill),” as the Books call it, though it is more properly a blunt Knoll or “ Rise,”—the nearest of a Chain of Knolls, or swells in the ground, which runs from north to south on that part.

Except the Zobtenberg, rising blue and massive, on

the southern horizon (famous mythologic Mountain, reminding you of an *Arthur's Seat* in shape too, only bigger and solitary), this Country, for many miles round, has nothing that could be called a Hill; it is definable as a bare wide-waving champaign, with slight bumps on it, or slow heavings and sinkings. Country mostly under culture, though it is of sandy quality; one or two sluggish brooks in it; and reedy meres or mires, drained in our day. It is dotted with Hamlets of the usual kind; and has patches of scraggy fir. Your horizon, even where bare, is limited, owing to the wavy heavings of the ground; windmills and church-belfries are your only resource, and even these, from about Leuthen and the Austrian position, leave the Borne quarter mostly invisible to you. Leuthen Belfry, the same which may have stood a hundred years before this Battle, ends in a small tile-roof, open only at the gables:—"Leuthen Belfry," says a recent Tourist, "is of small resource for a view. To south you can see some distance, Sagschütz, Lobetintz, and other Hamlets, amid scraggy fir-patches, and meadows, once miry pools; but to north, you are soon shut-in by a swell or slow rise, with two windmills upon it" (important to readers at present); "and to eastward" (Breslau side and Lissa side), "or to westward" (Friedrich's side), "one has no view, except the old warped rafters and their old mouldy tiles within few inches; or, if by audacious efforts at each end, to the risk of your neck, you get a transient peep, it is stopt, far short of Borne, by the slow irregular heavings, with or without fir about them."

In short, Friedrich keeps possession of that Borne ridge of Knolls, escorted by cavalry in good numbers; twinkling about in an enigmatic way:—"Prussian right wing yonder," think the Austrians; "whitherward, or what can they mean?"—and keeps his own columns and the Austrian lines in view; himself and his movements invisible, or worse, to the Austrian Generals from any spyglass or conjecture they can employ.

The Austrian Generals are in windmills, on church-belfries, here, there; diligently scanning the abstruse

phenomenon, of which so little can be seen. Daun, who had always been against this adventure, thinks it probable the vanished Prussians are retiring southward : for Bohemia and our Magazines probably. "These good people are smuggling off (*Die guten Leute paschen ab*)," said he : "let them go in peace." Daun, that morning, in his reconnoiterings, had asked of a peasant, "What is that, then ?" (meaning the top of a Village-steeple in the distance, but thought by the peasant to be meaning something nearer hand). "That is the Hill our King chases the Austrians over, when he is reviewing here !" Which Daun reported at headquarters with a grin.

Lucchesi, on the other hand, scanning those Borne Hills, and the Cavalry of Friedrich's escort twinkling hither and thither on them, becomes convinced to a moral certainty, That yonder is the Prussian Vanguard, probable extremity of left wing ; and that he, Lucchesi, here at Nypern, is to be attacked. "Attacked, you ?" said one Montazet, French Agent or Emissary here : "unless they were snipes, it is impossible !" But Lucchesi saw it too well.

He sends to say that such is the evident fact, and that he, Lucchesi, is not equal to it, but must have large reinforcement of Horse to his right wing. "Tush !" answer Prince Karl and Daun ; and return only argument, verbal consolation, to distressed Lucchesi. Lucchesi sends a second message, more passionately pressing, to the like effect ; also with the like return. Upon which he sends a third message, quite passionate : "If Cavalry do not come, I will not be responsible for the issue !" And now Daun does collect the required reinforcement ; "all the reserve of Horse, and a great many from the left wing ;"—and, Daun himself heading them, goes off at a swift trot ; to look into Lucchesi and his distresses, three or four miles to right, five or six from where the danger lies. Now is Friedrich's golden moment.

Wending always south, on their western or invisible side of those Knolls, Friedrich's people have got to about the level, or *latitude* as we might call it, of

Nadasti's left. To Radaxdorf, namely, to Lobetintz, or still farther south, and perhaps a mile to west of Nadasti. Friedrich has mounted to Lobetintz Windmill ; and judges that the time is come. Daun and Cavalry once gone to support their right wing, and our south latitude being now sufficient, Friedrich, swift as Prussian manœuvring can do it, falls with all his strength upon their left wing. Forms in oblique order,—horse, foot, artillery, all perfect in their paces ; and comes streaming over the Knolls at Sagschütz, suddenly like a fire deluge on Nadasti, who had charge there, and was expecting no such adventure ! \* \* \*

Nadasti, a skilful War-Captain, especially with Horse, was beautifully posted about Sagschütz ; his extreme left folded up *en potence* there (elbow of it at Sagschütz, fore-arm of it running to Gohlau eastward) ; potence ending in firwood Knolls with Croat musketeers, in ditches, ponds, difficult ground, especially towards Gohlau. He has a strong battery, 14 pieces, on the Height to rear of him, at the angle or elbow of his potence ; strong abatis, well manned in front to rightwards : upon this, and upon the Croats in the firwood, the Prussians intend their attack. General Wedell is there, Prince Moritz as chief, with six battalions, and their batteries, battery of 10 Brummers and another ; Ziethen also and Horse : coming on, in swift fire-flood, and at an angle of forty-five degrees. Most unexpected, strange to behold ! From south-west yonder ; about one o'clock of the day.

Nadasti, though astonished at the Prussian fire-deluge, stands to his arms ; makes, in front, vigorous defence ; and even takes, in some sort, the initiative,—that is, dashes-out his Cavalry on Ziethen, before Ziethen has charged. Ziethen's Horse, who are rightmost of the Prussians, and are bare to the right,—ground offering no bush, no brook there (though Ziethen, foreseeing such defect, has a clump of infantry near by to mend it), —reel back under this first shock, coming downhill upon them ; and would have fared badly, had not the clump

of infantry instantly opened fire on the Nadasti visitors, and poured it in such floods upon them, that they, in their turn had to reel back. Back they, well out of range ;—and leave Ziethen free for a counter-attack shortly, on easier terms, which was successful to him. For, during that first tussle of his, the Prussian Infantry, to left of Ziethen, has attacked the Sagschütz Firwood ; clears that of Croats ; attacks Nadasti's line, breaks it, their Brummer battery potently assisting, and the rage of Wedell and everybody being extreme. So that, in spite of the fine ground, Nadasti is in a bad way on the extreme left or outmost point of his *potence*, or tactical knee. Round the kneepan or angle of his *potence*, where is the abatis, he fares still worse. Abatis, beswept by those ten Brummers and other Batteries, till bullet and bayonet can act on it, speedily gives way. “They were mere Würtembergers, these ; and could not stand !” cried the Austrians apologetically at a great rate, afterwards ; as if anybody could well have stood.

Indisputably the Würtembergers and the abatis are gone ; and the Brandenburgers, storming after them, storm Nadasti's interior battery of 14 pieces ; and Nadasti's affairs are rapidly getting desperate in this quarter. Figure Prince Karl's scouts, galloping madly to recall that Daun Cavalry ! Austrian Battalions, plenty of them, rush down to help Nadasti ; but they are met by the crowding fugitives, the chasing Prussians ; are themselves thrown into disorder, and can do no good whatever. They arrive on the ground, flurried, blown ; have not the least time to take breath and order : the fewest of them ever got fairly ranked, none of them ever stood above one push : all goes rolling wildly back upon the centre about Leuthen. Chaos come on us ;—and all for mere lack of time : could Nadasti but once stretch out one minute into twenty ! But he cannot. Nadasti does not himself lose head ; skilfully covers the retreat, trying to rally once and again. Not for the first few furlongs, till the ditches, till the firwood, quagmires are all done, could Ziethen,

now on the open ground, fairly hew in ; "take whole battalions prisoners ;" drive the crowd in an altogether stormy manner ; and wholly confound the matter in this part.

Prince Karl, his messengers flying madly, has struggled as man seldom did to put himself in some posture about Leuthen, to get-up some defences there. Leuthen itself, the churchyard of it especially, is on the defensive. Men are bringing cannon to the windmills, to the swelling ground on the north side of Leuthen ; they dig ditches, build batteries,—could they but make Time halt, and Friedrich with him, for one quarter of an hour ! But they cannot. By the extreme of diligence, the Austrians have in some measure swung themselves into a new position, or imperfect Line round Leuthen as a centre,—Lucchesi, voluntarily or by order, swinging southwards on the one hand ; Nadasti swinging northwards by compulsion ;—new Line at an angle say of  $75^{\circ}$  to the old one. And here, for an hour more, there was stiff fighting, the stiffest of the day ;—of which, take one direct glimpse, from the Austrian side, furnished by a Young Gentleman famous afterwards :

Leuthen, let us premise, is a long Hamlet of the usual littery sort ; with two rows, in some parts three, of farm-houses, barns, cattle-stalls ; with Church, or even with two Churches, a Protestant and a Catholic ; goes from east to west above a mile in length. With the wrecks of Nadasti tumbling into it pell-mell from the south-east, and Lucchesi desperately endeavouring to swing round from the north-west, not quite incoherently, and the Prussian fire-storm for accompaniment, Leuthen is probably the most chaotic place in the Planet Earth, during that hour or so (from half-past two to half-past three) while the agony lasted. At one o'clock Nadasti was attacked ; at two, he is tumbling in mid-career towards Leuthen ; I guess the date of this Excerpt, or testimony by a Notable Eye-witness, may be half-past two ; crisis of the agony

just about to begin: and before four it was all finished again. \* \* \*

Stiff fighting at Leuthen; especially furious till Leuthen Churchyard, a place with high stone-walls, was got. Leuthen Village, we observe, was crammed with Austrians spitting fire from every coign of vantage; Church and Churchyard especially are a citadel of death. Cannon playing from the Windmill Heights, too;—moments are inestimable. The Prussian Commander (name charitably hidden), at Leuthen Charchyard, seems to hesitate in the murderous fire-deluge: Major Möllendorf, nameable from that day forward, growling, "No time this for study," dashes-out himself, "*Ein andrer Mann* (Follow me, whoever is a man)!—" smashes-in the Church-Gate of the place, nine muskets blazing on him through it; smashes, after a desperate struggle, the Austrians clean out of it; and conquers the citadel.

The Austrians, on confused terms, made stiff dispute in this second position, for about an hour. The Prussian Reserve was ordered up by Friedrich; the Prussian left wing, which had stood "refused," about Radaxdorf, till now: at one time nearly all the Prussians were in fire. Friedrich is here, is there, wherever the press was greatest; "Prince Ferdinand," whom we now and then find named, as a diligent little fellow, and ascertain to be here in this and other Battles of Friedrich's,—"Prince Ferdinand at one time pointed his cannon on the Bush or Fir-Clump of Radaxdorf;—an aide-de-camp came to him with message: 'You are firing on the King; the King is yonder!' At which Ferdinand" (his dear little Brother) "*erschrack*," or almost fainted with terror.

Stiff dispute; and had the Austrians possessed the Prussian dexterity in manœuvring, and a Friedrich been among them,—perhaps? But on their own terms, there was from the first little hope in it. "Behind the Windmills they are a hundred men deep;" by and by, your Windmills, riddled to pieces, have to be abandoned; the Prussian left wing rushing on with bayonets, will not all of you have to go? Lucchesi, with his

abundant Cavalry, seeing this latter movement and the Prussian flank bare in that part, will do a stroke upon them ;—and this proved properly the finale of the matter, final to both Lucchesi and it.

The Prussian flank was to appearance bare in that leftward quarter; but only to appearance : Driesen with the left wing of Horse is in a Hollow hard by; strictly charged by Friedrich to protect said flank, and take nothing else in hand. Driesen lets Lucchesi gallop by, in this career of his; then emerges, ranked, and comes storming-in upon Lucchesi's back,—entirely confounding his astonished Cavalry and their career. Astonished Cavalry, bullet-storm on this side of them, edge of sword on that, take wing in all directions (or all except to west and south) quite over the horizon ; Lucchesi himself gets killed,—crosses a still wider horizon, poor man. He began the ruin, and he ends it. For now Driesen takes the bared Austrians in flank, in rear ; and all goes tumbling here too, and in few minutes is a general deluge rearward towards Saara and Lissa side.

At Saara the Austrians, sun just sinking, made a third attempt to stand ; but it was hopelessly faint this time ; went all asunder at the first push ; and flowed then, torrent-wise, towards all its Bridges over the Schweidnitz Water, towards Breslau by every method. There are four Bridges, Stabelwitz below Lissa ; Goldschmieden, Hermannsdorf, above ; and the main one at Lissa itself, a standing Bridge on the Highroad (also of wood) ; and by this the chief torrent flows ; Prussian horse pursuing vigorously ; Prussian Infantry drawn up at Saara, resting some minutes, after such a day's work.

Truly a memorable bit of work ; no finer done for a hundred years, or for hundreds of years ; and the results of it manifold, immediate and remote. About 10,000 Austrians are left on the field, 3,000 of them slain ; prisoners already 12,000, in a short time 21,000 ; flags 51, cannon 116 ;—“Conquest of Silesia” gone to water ; Prince Karl and Austria fallen from their high hopes, in

one day. The Prussians lost in killed 1,141, in wounded 5,118; 85 had been taken prisoners about Sagschütz and Gohlau, in the first struggle there. There and at Leuthen Village have been the two tough passages; about an hour each; in three hours the Battle was done. "*Meine Herren*," said Friedrich, that night at parole, "after such a spell of work, you deserve rest. This day will bring the renown of your name, and of the Nation's, to the latest posterity."

High and low had shone this day; especially these four: Ziethen, Driesen, Retzow,—and above all Moritz of Dessau. Riding up the line, as night fell, Friedrich, in passing Moritz and the right wing, drew bridle for an instant: "I congratulate you on the Victory, Herr Feldmarschall!" cried he cheerily, and with emphasis on the last word. Moritz, still very busy, answered slightly; and Friedrich repeated louder, "Don't you hear that I congratulate you, Herr *Feldmarschall*!"—a glad sound to Moritz, who ever since Kolin had stood rather in the shadow. "You have helped me, and performed every order, as none ever did before in any battle," added the grateful King. \* \* \*

King rides directly to the Schloss, which is still a fine handsome house, off the one street of that poor Village,—north side of street; well railled off, and its old ditches and defences now trimmed into flower-plots. The Schloss is full of Austrian Officers, bustling about, intending to quarter, when the King enters. They, and the force they still had in Lissa, could easily have taken him: but how could they know? Friedrich was surprised; but had to put the best face on it. "*Bon soir, Messieurs!*" said he, with a gay tone, stepping in: "Is there still room left, think you?" The Austrians, bowing to the dust, make way reverently to the divinity that hedges a King of this sort; mutely escort him to the best room (such the popular account); and for certain make off, they and theirs, towards the Bridge, which lies a little farther east, at the end of the Village.

Weistritz or Schweidnitz Water is a biggish muddy stream in that part; gushing and eddying; not voice-

less, vexed by mills and their weirs. Some firing there was from Croats in the lower houses of the Village, and they had a cannon at the farther Bridge-end ; but they were glad to get away, and vanish in the night ; muddy Weistritz singing hoarse adieu to their cannon and them. Prussian grenadiers plunged indignant into the houses ; made short work of the musketries there. In few minutes, every Croat and Austrian was across, or silenced otherwise too well ; Prussian cannon now going in the rear of them, and continuing to go,—such had been the order, “till the powder you have is done.” Fire of musketry and occasional cannon lasts all night, from the Lissa or Prussian side of the River,—“lest they burn this Bridge, or attempt some mischief.” A thing far from their thoughts, in present circumstances.

The Prussian Host at Saara, hearing these noises, took to its arms again ; and marched after the King. Thick darkness ; silence ; tramp, tramp :—a Prussian grenadier broke out, with solemn tenor voice again, into Church-Music ; a known Church-Hymn, of the homely *Te-Deum* kind ; in which five-and-twenty thousand other voices, and all the regimental bands, soon join :

“*Nun danket alle Gott  
Mit Herzen Mund und Händen,*  
*Der grosse Dinge thut  
An uns und allen Enden.*”

“ Now thank God, one and all,  
With heart, with voice, with  
hands-a,  
Who wonders great hath done  
To us and to all lands-a.”

And thus they advance ; melodious, far-sounding, through the hollow Night, once more in a highly remarkable manner. A pious people, of right Teutsch stuff, tender though stout ; and, except perhaps Oliver Cromwell’s handful of Ironsides, probably the most perfect soldiers ever seen hitherto. Arriving at the end of Lissa, and finding all safe as it should be there, they make their bivouac, their parallelogram of two lines, miles long across the fields, left wing resting on Lissa, right on Guckerwitz ; and,—having, I should think, at least tobacco to depend on, with abundant stick-fires,

and healthy joyful hearts,—pass the night in a thankful, comfortable manner.

Leuthen was the most complete of all Friedrich's victories; two hours more of daylight, as Friedrich himself says, and it would have been the most decisive of this century. As it was, the ruin of this big Army, 80,000 against 30,000, was as good as total; and a world of Austrian hopes suddenly collapsed; and all their Silesian Apparatus, making sure of Silesia beyond an *if*, was tumbled into wreck,—by this one stroke it had got, smiting the corner-stone of it as if with unexpected lightning.

## VIII

### FRIEDRICH'S LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH

(BOOK XXI, CHAPTER IX)

HE well knew himself to be dying; but some think, expected that the end might be a little farther off. There is a grand simplicity of stoicism in him; coming as if by nature, or by long *second-nature*; finely unconscious of itself, and finding nothing of peculiar in this new trial lain on it. From of old, Life has been infinitely contemptible to him. In death, I think, he has neither fear nor hope. Atheism, truly, he never could abide: to him, as to all of us, it was flatly inconceivable that intellect, moral emotion, could have been put into *him* by an Entity that had none of its own. But there, pretty much, his Theism seems to have stopped. Instinctively, too, he believed, no man more firmly, that Right alone has ultimately any strength in this world: ultimately, yes;—but for him and his poor brief interests, what good was it? Hope for himself in Divine Justice, in Divine Providence, I think he had not practically any; that the unfathomable Demiurgus should concern himself with such a set of paltry ill-given

animalcules as oneself and mankind are, this also, as we have often noticed, is in the main incredible to him.

A sad Creed, this of the King's ;—he had to do his duty without fee or reward. Yes, reader ;—and what is well worth your attention, you will have difficulty to find, in the annals of any Creed, a King or man who stood more faithfully to his duty ; and, till the last hour, alone concerned himself with doing that. To poor Friedrich that was all the Law and all the Prophets : and I much recommend you to surpass him, if you, by good luck, have a better Copy of those inestimable Documents !—Inarticulate notions, fancies, transient aspirations, he might have, in the background of his mind. One day, sitting for a while out of doors, gazing into the Sun, he was heard to murmur, “Perhaps I shall be nearer thee soon :”—and indeed nobody knows what his thoughts were in these final months. There is traceable only a complete superiority to Fear and Hope ; in parts, too, are half-glimpses of a great motionless interior lake of Sorrow, sadder than any tears or complainings, which are altogether wanting to it. \* \* \*

*Tuesday August 15th, 1786,* Contrary to all wont, the King did not awaken till 11 o'clock. On first looking up, he seemed in a confused state, but soon recovered himself ; called in his Generals and Secretaries, who had been in waiting so long, and gave, with his old precision, the Orders wanted,—one to Rohdich, Commandant of Potsdam, about a Review of the troops there next day ; Order minutely perfect, in knowledge of the ground, in foresight of what and how the evolutions were to be ; which was accordingly performed on the morrow. The Cabinet work he went through with the like possession of himself, giving, on every point, his Three Clerks their directions, in a weak voice, yet with the old power of spirit,—dictated to one of them, among other things, an “Instruction” for some Ambassador just leaving ; “four quarto pages, which,” says Herzberg, “would have done honour to the most experienced Minister ;” and, in the evening, he signed his Missives as usual. This evening still,—but—no evening more. We are

now at the last scene of all, which ends this strange eventful History.

Wednesday morning, General-Adjutants, Secretaries, Commandant, were there at their old hours ; but word came out, "Secretaries are to wait :" King is in a kind of sleep, of stertorous ominous character, as if it were the death-sleep ; seems not to recollect himself, when he does at intervals open his eyes. After hours of this, on a ray of consciousness, the King bethought him of Rohdich, the Commandant ; tried to give Rohdich the Parole as usual ; tried twice, perhaps three times ; but found he could not speak ;—and with a glance of sorrow, which seemed to say, "It is impossible, then !" turned his head, and sank back into the corner of his chair. Rohdich burst into tears : the King again lay slumberous ;—the rattle of death beginning soon after, which lasted at intervals all day. Selle, in Berlin, was sent for by express ; he arrived about 3 of the afternoon : King seemed a little more conscious, knew those about him, "his face red rather than pale, in his eyes still something of their old fire." Towards evening the feverishness abated (to Selle, I suppose, a fatal symptom) ; the King fell into a soft sleep, with warm perspiration ; but, on awakening, complained of cold, repeatedly of cold, demanding wrappage after wrappage ("Kissen," soft quilt of the old fashion) ;—and on examining feet and legs, one of the Doctors made signs that they were in fact cold, up nearly to the knee. "What said he of the feet?" murmured the King some time afterwards, the Doctor having now stepped out of sight. "Much the same as before," answered some attendant. The King shook his head, incredulous.

He drank once, grasping the goblet with both hands, a draught of fennel-water, his customary drink ; and seemed relieved by it ;—his last reflection in this world. Towards nine in the evening, there had come on a continual short cough, and a rattling in the breast, breath more and more difficult. Why continue? Friedrich is making exit, on the common terms ; you may hear the curtain rustling down. For most part he

was unconscious, never more than half-conscious. As the wall-clock above his head struck 11, he asked : "What o'clock?" "Eleven," answered they. "At 4," murmured he, "I will rise." One of his dogs sat on its stool near him ; about midnight he noticed it shivering for cold : "Throw a quilt over it," said or beckoned he ; that, I think, was his last completely-conscious utterance. Afterwards, in a severe choking fit, getting at last rid of the phlegm, he said, "*La montagne est passée, nous irons mieux.* We are over the hill, we shall go better now."

Attendants, Herzberg, Selle and one or two others, were in the outer room ; none in Friedrich's but Strützki, his Kammerhussar, one of Three who are his sole valets and nurses ; a faithful ingenious man, as they all seem to be, and excellently chosen for the object. Strützki, to save the King from hustling down, as he always did, into the corner of his chair, where, with neck and chest bent forward, breathing was impossible,—at last took the King on his knee ; kneeling on the ground with his other knee for the purpose,—King's right arm round Strützki's neck, Strützki's left arm round the King's back, and supporting his other shoulder ; in which posture the faithful creature, for above two hours, sat motionless, till the end came. Within doors, all is silence, except this breathing ; around it the dark earth silent, above it the silent stars. At 20 minutes past 2, the breathing paused,—wavered ; ceased. Friedrich's Life-battle is fought out ; instead of suffering and sore labour, here is now rest. Thursday morning 17th August 1786, at the dark hour just named. On the 31st of May last, this King had reigned 46 years. "He has lived," counts Rödenbeck, "74 years, 6 months and 24 days."

His death seems very stern and lonely ;—a man of such affectionate feelings, too ; "a man with more sensibility than other men !" But so had his whole life been, stern and lonely ; such the severe law laid on him. Nor was it inappropriate that he found his death in that poor Silesian Review ; punctually doing, as usual, the work

that had come in hand. Nor that he died now, rather than a few years later. In these final days of his, we have transiently noticed Arch-Cardinal de Rohan, Arch-Quack Cagliostro, and a most select Company of Persons and of Actions, like an Elixir of the Nether World, miraculously emerging into daylight; and all Paris, and by degrees all Europe, getting loud with the *Diamond-Necklace* History. And to eyes of deeper speculation,—World-Poet Goethe's, for instance,—it is becoming evident that Chaos is again big. As has not she proved to be, and is still proving, in the most teeming way! Better for a Royal Hero, fallen old and feeble, to be hidden from such things. \* \* \*

Friedrich was not buried at Sans-Souci, in the Tomb which he had built for himself; why not, nobody clearly says. By his own express will, there was no embalming. Two Regiment-surgeons washed the Corpse, decently prepared it for interment: "at 8 that same evening, Friedrich's Body, dressed in the uniform of the First Battalion of Guards, and laid in its coffin, was borne to Potsdam, in a hearse of eight horses, twelve Non-commissioned Officers of the Guard escorting. All Potsdam was in the streets; the Soldiers, of their own accord, formed rank, and followed the hearse; many a rugged face unable to restrain tears: for the rest, universal silence as of midnight, nothing audible among the people but here and there a sob, and the murmur, 'Ach, der gute König!'

"All next day, the Body lay in state in the Palace; thousands crowding, from Berlin and the other environs, to see that face for the last time. Wasted, worn; but beautiful in death, with the thin gray hair parted into locks, and slightly powdered. And at 8 in the evening" (Friday 18th), "he was borne to the Garnison-Kirche of Potsdam; and laid beside his Father, in the vault behind the Pulpit there,"—where the two Coffins are still to be seen.

I define him to myself as hitherto the Last of the Kings;—when the Next will be, is a very long question!

But it seems to me as if Nations, probably all Nations, by and by, in their despair,—blinded, swallowed like Jonah, in such a whale's-belly of things brutish, waste, abominable (for is not Anarchy, or the Rule of what is Baser over what is Nobler, the one life's-misery worth complaining of, and, in fact, the abomination of abominations, springing from and producing all others whatsoever?)—as if the Nations universally, and England too if it hold on, may more and more bethink themselves of such a Man and his Function and Performance, with feelings far other than are possible at present. Meanwhile, all I had to say of him is finished: that too, it seems, was a bit of work appointed to be done. Adieu, good readers; bad also, adieu.

## PEN PORTRAITS

PITT.—Pitt, though nobly eloquent, is a Man of Action, not of Speech ; an authentically Royal kind of Man. And if there were a Plutarch in these times, with a good deal of leisure on his hands, he might run a Parallel between Friedrich and Chatham. Two radiant Kings ; very shining Men of Action both ; both of them hard bested, as the case often is. For your born King will generally have, if not “all Europe against him,” at least pretty much all the Universe. Chatham’s course to Kingship was not straight or smooth,—as Friedrich, too, had his well-nigh fatal difficulties on the road. Again, says the Plutarch, they are very brave men both ; and of a clearness and veracity peculiar among their contemporaries. In Chatham, too, there is something of the flash of steel ; a very sharp-cutting, penetrative, rapid individual, he too ; and shaped for action, first of all, though he has to talk so much in the world. Fastidious, proud, no King could be prouder, though his element is that of Free-Senate and Democracy. And he has a beautiful poetic delicacy, withal ; great tenderness in him, playfulness, grace ; in all ways, an airy as well as a solid loftiness of mind. Not born a King,—alas, no, not officially so, only naturally so ; has his kingdom to seek. The Conquering of Silesia, the Conquering of the Pelham Parliaments—— But we will shut-up the Plutarch with time on his hands.

Pitt’s Speeches, as I spell them from Walpole and the other faint tracings left, are full of genius in the vocal kind, far beyond any Speeches delivered in Parliament : serious always, and the very truth, such as he has it ; but going in many dialects and modes ; full

of airy flashings, twinkles and coruscations. Sport, as of sheet-lightning glancing about, the bolt lying under the horizon ; bolt *hidden*, as is fit, under such a horizon as he had. A singularly radiant man. Could have been a Poet, too, in some small measure, had he gone on that line. There are many touches of genius, comic, tragic, lyric, something of humour even, to be read in those *Shadows of Speeches* taken down for us by Walpole. \* \* \*

In one word, Pitt, shining like a gleam of sharp steel in that murk of contemptibilities, is carefully steering his way towards Kingship over it. Tragical it is (especially in Pitt's case, first and last) to see a Royal Man, or Born King, wading towards his throne in such an element. But, alas, the Born King (even when he tries, which I take to be the rarer case) so seldom can arrive there at all ;—sinful Epochs there are, when Heaven's curse has been spoken, and it is that awful Being, the Born Sham-King, that arrives ! Pitt, however, does it. Yes, and the more we study Pitt, the more we shall find he does it in a peculiarly high, manful, and honourable as well as dextrous manner ; and that English History has a right to call him “the acme and highest man of Constitutional Parliaments ; the like of whom was not in any Parliament called Constitutional, nor will again be.”

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MARIE ANTOINETTE.—Marie Antoinette, as the reader well knows, has been much blamed for want of Etiquette. Even now, when the other accusations against her have sunk down to oblivion and the Father of Lies, this of wanting Etiquette survives her :—in the Castle of Ham, at this hour,<sup>1</sup> M. de Polignac and Company may be wringing their hands, not without an oblique glance at *her* for bringing them thither. She indeed discarded Etiquette ; once, when her carriage broke down, she even entered a hackney-coach. She would walk, too, at Trianon, in mere straw-hat, and

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1831.

perhaps muslin gown ! Hence, the Knot of Etiquette being loosed, the Frame of Society broke up ; and those astonishing "Horrors of the French Revolution" supervened. On what Damocles' hairs must the judgment-sword hang over this distracted Earth ! Thus, however, it was that Tenterden Steeple brought an influx of the Atlantic on us, and so Godwin Sands. Thus, too, might it be that because Father Noah took the liberty of, say, rinsing out his wine-vat, his Ark was floated off, and a world drowned.—Beautiful Highborn that wert so foully hurled low ! For, if thy Being came to thee out of old Hapsburg Dynasties, came it not also (like my own) out of Heaven ? *Sunt lachrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt.* Oh, is there a man's heart that thinks, without pity, of those long months and years of slow-wasting ignominy ;—of thy Birth, soft-cradled in Imperial Schönbrunn, the winds of heaven not to visit thy face too roughly, thy foot to light on softness, thy eye on splendour ; and then of thy Death, or hundred Deaths, to which the Guillotine and Fouquier Tinville's judgment-bar was but the merciful end ? Look there, O man born of woman ! The bloom of that fair face is wasted, the hair is gray with care ; the brightness of those eyes is quenched, their lids hang drooping, the face is stony pale as of one living in death. Mean weeds, which her own hand has mended, attire the Queen of the World. The death-hurdle, where thou sittest pale motionless, which only curses environ, has to stop : a people, drunk with vengeance, will drink it again in full draught, looking at thee there. Far as the eye reaches, a multitudinous sea of maniac heads ; the air deaf with their triumph-yell ! The Living-dead must shudder with yet one other pang ; her startled blood yet again suffuses with the hue of agony that pale face, which she hides with her hands. There is then *no* heart to say, God pity thee ? O think not of these ; think of HIM whom thou worshippest, the Crucified,—who also treading the wine-press *alone*, fronted sorrow still deeper ; and triumphed over it, and made it holy ; and built of it a "Sanctuary of Sorrow," for thee and

all the wretched ! Thy path of thorns is nigh ended. One long last look at the Tuileries, where thy step was once so light,—where thy children shall not dwell. The head is on the block ; the axe rushes—Dumb lies the World ; that wild-yelling World, and all its madness, is behind thee.

Beautiful Highborn that wert so foully hurled low ! Rest yet in thy innocent gracefully heedless seclusion, unintruded on by *me*, while rude hands have not yet desecrated it. Be the curtains, that shroud-in (if for the last time on this Earth) a Royal Life, still sacred to me. *Thy* fault, in the French Revolution, was that thou wert the Symbol of the Sin and Misery of a thousand years ; that with Saint-Bartholomews, and Jacqueries, with Gabelles, and Dragonades, and Parcs-aux-cerfs, the heart of mankind was filled full,—and foamed over, into all-involving madness. To no Napoleon, to no Cromwell wert thou wedded : such sit not in the highest rank, of themselves ; are raised on high by the shaking and confounding of all the ranks ! As poor peasants, how happy, worthy had ye two been ! But by evil destiny ye were made King and a Queen of ; and so both once more—are become an astonishment and a by-word to all times.

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JOHN STERLING.—Sterling was of rather slim but well-boned wiry figure, perhaps an inch or two from six feet in height ; of blonde complexion, without colour, yet not pale or sickly ; dark-blonde hair, copious enough, which he usually wore short. The general aspect of him indicated freedom, perfect spontaneity, with a certain careless natural grace. In his apparel, you could notice, he affected dim colours, easy shapes ; cleanly always, yet even in this not fastidious or conspicuous : he sat or stood, oftenest, in loose sloping postures ; walked with long strides, body carelessly bent, head flung eagerly forward, right hand perhaps grasping a cane, and rather by the middle to swing it, than by the end to use it otherwise. An attitude of frank, cheerful impetuosity,

of hopeful speed and alacrity; which indeed his physiognomy, on all sides of it, offered as the chief expression. Alacrity, velocity, joyous ardour, dwelt in the eyes too, which were of brownish gray, full of bright kindly life, rapid and frank rather than deep or strong. A smile, half of kindly impatience, half of real mirth, often sat on his face. The head was long; high over the vertex; in the brow, of fair breadth, but not high for such a man.

In the voice, which was of good tenor sort, rapid and strikingly distinct, powerful too, and except in some of the higher notes harmonious, there was a clear-ringing metallic tone,—which I often thought was wonderfully physiognomic. A certain splendour, beautiful, but not the deepest or the softest, which I could call a splendour as of burnished metal,—fiery valour of heart, swift decisive insight and utterance, then a turn for brilliant elegance, also for ostentation, rashness, &c. &c.,—in short a flash as of clear-glancing sharp-cutting steel, lay in the whole nature of the man, in his heart and in his intellect, marking alike the excellence and the limits of them both. His laugh, which on light occasions was ready and frequent, had in it no great depth of gaiety, or sense for the ludicrous in men or things; you might call it rather a good smile become vocal than a deep real laugh: with his whole man I never saw him laugh. A clear sense of the humorous he had, as of most other things; but in himself little or no true humour;—nor did he attempt that side of things. To call him deficient in sympathy would seem strange, him whose radiances and resonances went thrilling over all the world, and kept him in brotherly contact with all: but I may say his sympathies dwelt rather with the high and sublime than with the low or ludicrous; and were, in any field, rather light, wide and lively, than deep, abiding or great.

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MARIA THERESA.—As for the brave young Queen of Hungary, my admiration goes with that of all the

world. Not in the language of flattery, but of evident fact, the royal qualities abound in that high young Lady ; had they left the world, and grown to mere costume elsewhere, you might find certain of them again here. Most brave, high and pious-minded ; beautiful too, and radiant with goodnature, though of temper that will easily catch fire : there is perhaps no nobler woman then living. And she fronts the roaring elements in a truly grand feminine manner ; as if Heaven itself and the voice of Duty called her : “The Inheritances which my Fathers left me, we will not part with these. Death, if it so must be ; but not dishonour :—Listen not to that thief in the night ! ” Maria Theresa has not studied, at all, the History of the Silesian Duchies ; she knows only that her Father and Grandfather peaceably held them ; it was not she that sent out Seckendorf to ride 25,000 miles, or broke the heart of Friedrich Wilhelm and his Household. Pity she had not complied with Friedrich, and saved such rivers of bitterness to herself and mankind ! But how could she see to do it,—especially with little George at her back, and abundance of money ? This, for the present, is her method of looking at the matter ; this magnanimous, heroic, and occasionally somewhat female one.

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SOPHIE CHARLOTTE.—Beyond doubt a bright airy lady, shining in mild radiance in those Northern parts ; very graceful, very witty and ingenious ; skilled to speak, skilled to hold her tongue,—which latter art also was frequently in requisition with her. She did not much venerate her Husband, nor the Court population, male or female, whom he chose to have about him : his and their ways were by no means hers, if she had cared to publish her thoughts. Friedrich I., it is admitted on all hands, was “an expensive Herr ;” much given to magnificent ceremonies, etiquettes and solemnities ; making no great way anywhither, and that always with noise enough, and with a dust vortex of courtier intrigues and cabals encircling him,—from

which it is better to stand quite to windward. Moreover he was slightly crooked ; most sensitive, thin of skin and liable to sudden flaws of temper, though at heart very kind and good. Sophie Charlotte is she who wrote once, “ Leibnitz talked to me of the infinitely little (*de l'infiniment petit*) : *mon Dieu*, as if I did not know enough of that ! ” Besides, it is whispered, she was once near marrying to Louis XIV.’s Dauphin ; her Mother Sophie, and her Cousin the Dowager Duchess of Orleans, cunning women both, had brought her to Paris in her girlhood, with that secret object ; and had very nearly managed it. Queen of France that might have been ; and now it is but Brandenburg, and the dice have fallen somewhat wrong for us ! She had Friedrich Wilhelm, the rough boy ; and perhaps nothing more of very precious property. Her first child, likewise a boy, had soon died, and there came no third : tedious ceremonials, and the infinitely little, were mainly her lot in this world.

All which, however, she had the art to take up not in the tragic way, but in the mildly comic,—often not to take up at all, but leave lying there ;—and thus to manage in a handsome and softly victorious manner. With delicate female tact, with fine female stoicism too ; keeping all things within limits. She was much respected by her Husband, much loved indeed ; and greatly mourned for by the poor man : the village Lützelburg (Little-town), close by Berlin, where she had built a mansion for herself, he fondly named *Charlottenburg* (Charlotte’s-town), after her death, which name both House and Village still bear. Leibnitz found her of an almost troublesome sharpness of intellect ; “ wants to know the why even of the why,” says Leibnitz. That is the way of female intellects when they are good ; nothing equals their acuteness, and their rapidity is almost excessive. Samuel Johnson, too, had a young-lady friend once “ with the acutest intellect I have ever known.”

On the whole, we may pronounce her clearly a superior woman, this Sophie Charlotte ; notable not for her

Grandson alone, though now pretty much forgotten by the world,—as indeed all things and persons have, one day or other, to be !

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**LEPOLD (THE OLD DESSAUER).**—This is a strange rugged specimen, this inarticulate Leopold ; already getting mythic, as we can perceive, to the polished vocal ages ; which mix all manner of fables with the considerable history he has. Readers will see him turn up again in notable forms. A man hitherto unknown except in his own country ; and yet of very considerable significance to all European countries whatsoever ; the fruit of his activities, without his name attached, being now manifest in all of them. He invented the iron ramrod ; he invented the equal step ; in fact he is the inventor of modern military tactics. Even so, if we knew it : the Soldiery of every civilised country still receives from this man, on parade-fields and battle-fields, its word of command ; out of his rough head proceeded the essential of all that the innumerable Drill-sergeants, in various languages, daily repeat and enforce. Such a man is worth some transient lance from his fellow-creatures, especially with a little Fritz trotting at his foot, and drawing inferences from him.

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**HUME AND JOHNSON.**—It is worthy of note that, in our little British Isle, the two grand Antagonisms of Europe should have stood embodied, under their very highest concentration, in two men produced simultaneously among ourselves. Samuel Johnson and David Hume, as was observed, were children nearly of the same year : through life they were spectators of the same Life-movement ; often inhabitants of the same city. Greater contrast, in all things, between two great men, could not be. Hume, well-born, competently provided for, whole in body and mind, of his own determination forces a way into Literature : Johnson, poor, moonstruck, diseased, forlorn, is forced into it

“with the bayonet of necessity at his back.” And what a part did they severally play there! As Johnson became the father of all succeeding Tories; so was Hume the father of all succeeding Whigs, for his own Jacobitism was but an accident, as worthy to be named Prejudice as any of Johnson’s. Again, if Johnson’s culture was exclusively English; Hume’s, in Scotland, became European;—for which reason too we find his influence spread deeply over all quarters of Europe, traceable deeply in all speculation, French, German, as well as domestic; while Johnson’s name, out of England, is hardly anywhere to be met with. In spiritual stature they are almost equal; both great, among the greatest: yet how unlike in likeness! Hume has the widest, methodising, comprehensive eye; Johnson the keenest for perspicacity and minute detail: so had, perhaps chiefly, their education ordered it. Neither of the two rose into Poetry; yet both to some approximation thereof: Hume to something of an Epic clearness and method, as in his delineation of the Commonwealth Wars; Johnson to many a deep Lyric tone of plaintiveness and impetuous graceful power, scattered over his fugitive compositions. Both, rather to the general surprise, had a certain rugged Humour shining through their earnestness: the indication, indeed, that they *were* earnest men, and had *subdued* their wild world into a kind of temporary home and safe dwelling. Both were, by principle and habit, Stoicks: yet Johnson with the greater merit, for he alone had very much to triumph over; farther, he alone ennobled his Stoicism into Devotion. To Johnson Life was as a Prison, to be endured with heroic faith: to Hume it was little more than a foolish Bartholomew-Fair Show-booth, with the foolish crowdings and elbowings of which it was not worth while to quarrel; the whole would break up, and be at liberty, so *soon*. Both realised the highest task of Manhood, that of living like men; each died not unsuitably, in his way: Hume as one, with factitious, half-false gaiety, taking leave of what was itself wholly but a Lie: Johnson as one, with awe-struck, yet resolute and

piously expectant heart, taking leave of a Reality, to enter a Reality still higher. Johnson had the harder problem of it, from first to last: whether, with some hesitation, we can admit that he was intrinsically the better-gifted, may remain undecided.

These two men now rest; the one in Westminster Abbey here; the other in the Calton-Hill Churchyard of Edinburgh. Through Life they did not meet: as contrasts, "like in unlike," love each other; so might they two have loved, and communed kindly,—had not the terrestrial dross and darkness, that was in them, withstood! One day, their spirits, what Truth was in each, will be found working, living in harmony and free union, even here below. They were the two half-men of their time: whoso should combine the intrepid Candour and decisive scientific Clearness of Hume, with the Reverence, the Love and devout Humility of Johnson, were the whole man of a new time. Till such whole man arrive for us, and the distracted time admit of such, might the Heavens but bless poor England with half-men worthy to tie the shoe-latchets of these, resembling these even from afar! Be both attentively regarded, let the true Effort of both prosper;—and for the present, both take our affectionate farewell!

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D'ALEMBERT.—D'Alembert too we may consider as one known; of all the Philosophe fraternity, him who in speech and conduct agrees best with our English notions: an independent, patient, prudent man; of great faculty, especially of great clearness and method; famous in Mathematics; no less so, to the wonder of some, in the intellectual provinces of Literature. A foolish wonder; as if the Thinker could think only on one thing, and not on *any* thing he had a call towards. D'Alembert's *Mélanges*, as the impress of a genuine spirit, in peculiar position and probation, have still instruction for us, both of head and heart. The man lives retired here, in questionable seclusion with his Espinasse; incurs the suspicion of apostasy, because in the *Encyclopédie* he

saw no Evangel and celestial Revelation, but only a huge Folio Dictionary ; and would not venture life and limb on it without a "consideration." Sad was it to Diderot to see his fellow-voyager make for port, and disregard signals, when the sea-krakens rose round him ! They did not quarrel ; were always friendly when they met, but latterly met only at the rate of "once in the two years." D'Alembert died when Diderot was on his deathbed : "My friends," said the latter to the news-bringer, "a great light is gone out."

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ROUSSEAU.—Hovering in the distance, with wostruck, minatory air, stern-beckoning, comes Rousseau. Poor Jean Jacques ! Alternately deified, and cast to the dogs; a deep-minded, high-minded, even noble, yet wofully misarranged mortal, with all misformations of Nature intensitated to the verge of madness by unfavourable Fortune. A lonely man ; his life a long soliloquy ! The wandering Tiresias of the time ;—in whom, however, did lie prophetic meaning, such as none of the others offer. Whereby indeed it might partly be that the world went to such extremes about him ; that, long after his departure, we have seen one whole nation worship him, and a Burke, in the name of another, class him with the offscourings of the earth. His true character, with its lofty aspirings and poor performings ; and how the spirit of the man worked so wildly, like celestial fire in a thick element of chaos, and shot forth ethereal radiance, all-piercing lightning, yet could not illuminate, was quenched and did not conquer : this, with what lies in it, may now be pretty accurately appreciated. Let his history teach all whom it concerns, to "*harden* themselves against the ills which Mother Nature will try them with ;" to seek within their own soul what the world must forever deny them ; and say composedly to the Prince of the Power of this lower Earth and Air : Go thou thy way ; I go mine ! \* \* \*

Poor Rousseau's face is to me expressive of him. A high, but narrow contracted intensity in it : bony

brows ; deep, strait-set eyes, in which there is something bewildered-looking,—bewildered, peering with lynx-eagerness. A face full of misery, even ignoble misery, and also of the antagonism against that ; something mean, plebeian there, redeemed only by *intensity* : the face of what is called a Fanatic,—a sadly contracted Hero ! We name him here because, with all his drawbacks, and they are many, he has the first and chief characteristic of a Hero : he is heartily *in earnest*. In earnest, if ever man was ; as none of these French Philosophes were. Nay, one would say, of an earnestness too great for his otherwise sensitive, rather feeble nature ; and which indeed in the end drove him into the strangest incoherences, almost delirations. There had come, at last, to be a kind of madness in him : his Ideas possessed him like demons ; hurried him so about, drove him over steep places !— \* \* \*

And yet this Rousseau, as we say, with his passionate appeals to Mothers, with his *Contrat-social*, with his celebrations of Nature, even of savage life in Nature, did once more touch upon Reality, struggle towards Reality ; was doing the function of a Prophet to his Time. As *he* could, and as the Time could ! Strangely through all that defacement, degradation and almost madness, there is in the inmost heart of poor Rousseau a spark of real heavenly fire. Once more, out of the element of that withered mocking Philosophism, Scepticism, and Persiflage, there has arisen in this man the ineradicable feeling and knowledge that this Life of ours is *true* ; not a Scepticism, Theorem, or Persiflage, but a Fact, an awful Reality. Nature had made that revelation to him ; had ordered him to speak it out. He got it spoken out ; if not well and clearly, then ill and dimly,—as clearly as he could. Nay what are all errors and perversities of his, even those stealings of ribbons, aimless confused miseries and vagabondisms, if we will interpret them kindly, but the blinkard dazzlement and staggerings to and fro of a man sent on an errand he is too weak for, by a path he cannot yet find ? Men are led by strange ways. One should have

tolerance for a man, hope of him ; leave him to try yet what he will do. While life lasts, hope lasts with every man.

Of Rousseau's literary talents, greatly celebrated still among his countrymen, I do not say much. His Books, like himself, are what I call unhealthy ; not the good sort of Books. There is a sensuality in Rousseau. Combined with such an intellectual gift as his, it makes pictures of a certain gorgeous attractiveness : but they are not genuinely poetical. Not white sunlight : something *operatic* ; a kind of rosepink, artificial bedizement. It is frequent, or rather it is universal, among the French since his time. Madame de Staël has something of it ; St. Pierre ; and down onwards to the present astonishing convulsionary "Literature of Desperation," it is everywhere abundant. That same *rosepink* is not the right hue. Look at a Shakspeare, at a Goethe, even at a Walter Scott ! He who has once seen into this, has seen the difference of the True from the Sham-True, and will discriminate them ever afterwards.

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ROBESPIERRE.—Consider Maximilien Robespierre ; for the greater part of two years, what one may call Autocrat of France. A poor sea-green (*verdâtre*), atrabiliar Formula of a man ; without head, without heart, or any grace, gift, or even vice beyond common, if it were not vanity, astucity, diseased rigour (which some count strength) as of a cramp : really a most poor sea-green individual in spectacles ; meant by Nature for a Methodist parson of the stricter sort, to doom men who departed from the written confession ; to chop fruitless shrill logic ; to contend, and suspect, and ineffectually wrestle and wriggle ; and, on the whole, to love, or to know, or to be (properly speaking) Nothing :—this was he who, the sport of wracking winds, saw himself whirled aloft to command *la première nation de l'univers*, and all men shouting long life to him : one of the most lamentable, tragic, sea-green objects,

ever whirled aloft in that manner, in any country, to his own swift destruction, and the world's long wonder !

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BURKE.—This last of the Tories was Johnson : not Burke, as is often said ; Burke was essentially a Whig, and only, on reaching the verge of the chasm towards which Whiggism from the first was inevitably leading, recoiled ; and, like a man vehement rather than earnest, a resplendent far-sighted Rhetorician rather than a deep sure Thinker, recoiled with no measure, convulsively, and damaging what he drove back with him.

## SHORTER EXTRACTS

BUT for great Men, let him who would know such, pray that he may see them daily face to face : for in the dim distance, and by the eye of the imagination, our vision, do what we may, will be too imperfect. How pale, thin, ineffectual do the great figures we would fain summon from History rise before us ! Scarcely as palpable men does our utmost effort body them forth ; oftenest only like Ossian's ghosts, in hazy twilight, with "stars dim twinkling through their forms." Our Socrates, our Luther, after all that we have talked and argued of them, are to most of us quite invisible ; the Sage of Athens, the Monk of Eisleben ; not Persons, but Titles. Yet such men, far more than any Alps or Coliseums, are the true world-wonders, which it concerns us to behold clearly, and imprint forever on our remembrance. Great men are the Fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of mankind ; they stand as heavenly Signs, everliving witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be, the revealed, embodied Possibilities of human nature ; which greatness he who has never seen, or rationally conceived of, and with his whole heart passionately loved and reverenced, is himself forever doomed to be little. How many weighty reasons, how many innocent allurements attract our curiosity to such men ! We would know them, see them visibly, even as we know and see our like : no hint, no notice that concerns them is superfluous or too small for us. Were Gulliver's Conjuror but here, to recall and sensibly bring back the brave Past, that we might look into it, and scrutinise it at will ! But alas, in Nature there is no such conjuring : the great spirits

that have gone before us can survive only as disembodied Voices; their form and distinctive aspect, outward and even in many respects inward, all whereby they were known as living, breathing men, has passed into another sphere; from which only History, in scanty memorials, can evoke some faint resemblance of it. The more precious, in spite of all imperfections, is such History, are such memorials, that still in some degree preserve what had otherwise been lost without recovery.

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Democracy, we are well aware, what is called “self-government” of the multitude by the multitude, is in words the thing everywhere passionately clamoured for at present. Democracy makes rapid progress in these latter times, and ever more rapid, in a perilous accelerative ratio; towards democracy, and that only, the progress of things is everywhere tending as to the final goal and winningpost. So think, so clamour the multitudes everywhere. And yet all men may see, whose sight is good for much, that in democracy can lie no finality; that with the completest winning of democracy there is nothing yet won,—except emptiness, and the free chance to win! Democracy is, by the nature of it, a self-cancelling business; and gives in the long-run a net result of *zero*. Where no government is wanted, save that of the parish-constable, as in America with its boundless soil, every man being able to find work and recompense for himself, democracy may subsist; not elsewhere, except briefly, as a swift transition towards something other and farther. Democracy never yet, that we heard of, was able to accomplish much work, beyond that same cancelling of itself. Rome and Athens are themes for the schools; unexceptionable for that purpose. In Rome and Athens, as elsewhere, if we look practically, we shall find that it was not by loud voting and debating of many, but by wise insight and ordering of a few that the work was done. So is it ever, so will it ever be.

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It is well said, in every sense, that a man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him. A man's, or a nation of men's. By religion I do not mean here the church-creed which he professes, the articles of faith which he will sign and, in words or otherwise, assert ; not this wholly, in many cases not this at all. We see men of all kinds of professed creeds attain to almost all degrees of worth or worthlessness under each or any of them. This is not what I call religion, this profession and assertion ; which is often only a profession and assertion from the outworks of the man, from the mere argumentative region of him, if even so deep as that. But the thing a man does practically believe (and this is often enough *without* asserting it even to himself, much less to others) ; the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest. That is his *religion* ; or, it may be, his mere scepticism and *no-religion* : the manner it is in which he feels himself to be spiritually related to the Unseen World or No-world ; and I say, if you tell me what that is, you tell me to a very great extent what the man is, what the kind of things he will do is. Of a man or of a nation we inquire, therefore, first of all, What religion they had? Was it Heathenism :—plurality of gods, mere sensuous representation of this Mystery of Life, and for chief recognised element therein Physical Force? Was it Christianity ; faith in an Invisible, not as real only, but as the only reality ; Time, through every meanest moment of it, resting on Eternity ; Pagan empire of Force displaced by a nobler supremacy, that of Holiness? Was it Scepticism uncertainty and inquiry whether there was an Unseen World, any Mystery of Life except a mad one ;—doubt as to all this, or perhaps unbelief and flat denial?

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“There is no Church, sayest thou? The voice of Prophecy has gone dumb? This is even what I dis-

pute: but in any case, hast thou not still Preaching enough? A Preaching Friar settles himself in every village; and builds a pulpit, which he calls Newspaper. Therefrom he preaches what most momentous doctrine is in him, for man's salvation; and dost not thou listen, and believe? Look well, thou seest everywhere a new Clergy of the Mendicant Orders, some bare-footed, some almost bare-backed, fashion itself into shape, and teach and preach, zealously enough, for copper alms and the love of God. These break in pieces the ancient idols; and, though themselves too often reprobate, as idol-breakers are wont to be, mark-out the sites of new Churches, where the true God-ordained, that are to follow, may find audience, and minister. Said I not, Before the old skin was shed, the new had formed itself beneath it?"

"But there is no Religion?" reiterates the Professor. "Fool! I tell thee, there is. Hast thou well considered all that lies in this immeasurable froth-ocean we name LITERATURE? Fragments of a genuine Church-*Homiletic* lie scattered there, which Time will assort: nay fractions even of a *Liturgy* could I point-out. And knowest thou no Prophet, even in the vesture, environment, and dialect of this age? None to whom the Godlike had revealed itself, through all meanest and highest forms of the Common: and by him been again prophetically revealed: in whose inspired melody, even in these rag-gathering and rag-burning days, Man's Life again begins, were it but afar off, to be divine? Knowest thou none such? I know him, and name him —Goethe.

"But thou as yet standest in no Temple; joinest in no Psalm worship; feelest well that, where there is no ministering Priest, the people perish? Be of comfort! Thou art not alone, if thou have Faith. Spake we not of a Communion of Saints, unseen, yet not unreal, accompanying and brother-like embracing thee, so thou be worthy? Their heroic Sufferings rise up melodiously together to Heaven, out of all lands, and out of all times, as a sacred *Miserere*; their heroic Actions also,

as a boundless everlasting Psalm of Triumph. Neither say that thou hast now no Symbol of the Godlike. Is not God's Universe a Symbol of the Godlike; is not Immensity a Temple; is not Man's History, and Men's History, a perpetual Evangel? Listen, and for organ-music thou wilt ever, as of old, hear the Morning Stars sing together."

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Above all, that "faint possible Theism," which now forms our common English creed, cannot be too soon swept out of the world. What is the nature of that individual, who with hysterical violence theoretically asserts a God, perhaps a revealed Symbol and Worship of God; and for the rest, in thought, word and conduct, meet with him where you will, is found living as if his theory were some polite figure of speech, and his theoretical God a mere distant Simulacrum, with whom he, for his part, had nothing farther to do? Fool! The ETERNAL is no Simulacrum; God is not only There, but Here or nowhere, in that life-breath of thine, in that act and thought of thine,—and thou wert wise to look to it. If there is no God, as the fool hath said in his heart, then live on with thy decencies, and lip-homages, and inward greed, and falsehood, and all the hollow cunningly-devised halfness that recommends thee to the Mammon of this world: if there *is* a God, we say, look to it! But in either case, what art thou? The Atheist is false; yet is there, as we see, a fraction of truth in him; he is true compared with thee; thou, unhappy mortal, livest wholly in a lie, art wholly a lie.

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To look at Teaching, for instance. Universities are a notable, respectable product of the modern ages. Their existence too is modified, to the very basis of it, by the existence of Books. Universities arose while there were yet no Books procurable; while a man, for a single Book, had to give an estate of land. That, in those circumstances, when a man had some knowledge

to communicate, he should do it by gathering the learners round him, face to face, was a necessity for him. If you wanted to know what Abelard knew, you must go and listen to Abelard. Thousands, as many as thirty thousand, went to hear Abelard and that metaphysical theology of his. And now for any other teacher who had also something of his own to teach, there was a great convenience opened: so many thousands eager to learn were already assembled yonder; of all places the best place for him was that. For any third teacher it was better still; and grew ever the better, the more teachers there came. It only needed now that the King took notice of this new phenomenon; combined or agglomerated the various schools into one school; gave it edifices, privileges, encouragements, and named it *Universitas*, or School of all Sciences: the University of Paris, in its essential characters, was there. The model of all subsequent Universities; which down even to these days, for six centuries now, have gone on to found themselves. Such, I conceive, was the origin of Universities.

It is clear, however, that with this simple circumstance, facility of getting Books, the whole conditions of the business from top to bottom were changed. Once invent Printing, you metamorphosed all Universities, or superseded them! The Teacher needed not now to gather men personally round him, that he might *speak* to them what he knew: print it in a Book, and all learners far and wide, for a trifle, had it each at his own fireside, much more effectually to learn it!—Doubtless there is still peculiar virtue in Speech; even writers of Books may still, in some circumstances, find it convenient to speak also,—witness our present meeting here! There is, one would say, and must ever remain while man has a tongue, a distinct province for Speech as well as for Writing and Printing. In regard to all things this must remain; to Universities among others. But the limits of the two have nowhere yet been pointed out, ascertained; much less put in practice: the University which would completely take-in that great

new fact, of the existence of Printed Books, and stand on a clear footing for the Nineteenth Century as the Paris one did for the Thirteenth, has not yet come into existence. If we think of it, all that a University, or final highest School can do for us, is still but what the first School began doing,—teach us to *read*. We learn to *read*, in various languages, in various sciences; we learn the alphabet and letters of all manner of Books. But the place where we are to get knowledge, even theoretic knowledge, is the Books themselves! It depends on what we read, after all manner of Professors have done their best for us. The true University of these days is a Collection of Books.

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There is a great discovery still to be made in Literature, that of paying literary men by the quantity they *do not* write. Nay, in sober truth, is not this actually the rule in all writing; and, moreover, in all conduct and acting? Not what stands aboveground, but what lies unseen *under* it, as the root and subterrene element it sprang from and emblemed forth, determines the value. Under all speech that is good for anything there lies a silence that is better. Silence is deep as Eternity; speech is shallow as Time. Paradoxical does it seem? Woe for the age, woe for the man, quack-ridden, bespecheded, bespouted, blown about like barren Sahara, to whom this world-old truth were altogether strange!—Such we say is the rule, acted on or not, recognised or not; and he who departs from it, what can he do but spread himself into breadth and length, into superficiality and saleability; and, except as filigree, become comparatively useless? One thinks, Had but the hogshead of thin wash, which sours in a week ready for the kennels, been distilled, been concentrated! Our dear Fenimore Cooper, whom we started with, might, in that way, have given us one *Natty Leatherstocking*, one melodious synopsis of Man and Nature in the West (for it lay in him to do it), almost as a Saint-Pierre did for the Islands of the East; and the hundred Incoherences, cobbled hastily together

by order of Colburn and Company, had slumbered in Chaos, as all incoherences ought if possible to do. Verily this same genius of diffuse-writing, of diffuse-acting, is a Moloch ; and souls pass through the fire to him, more than enough. Surely, if ever discovery was valuable and needful, it were that above indicated, of paying by the work *not* visibly done !—Which needful discovery we will give the whole projecting, railwaying, knowledge-diffusing, march-of-intellect and otherwise promotive and locomotive societies in the Old and New World, any required length of centuries to make. Once made, such discovery once made, we too will fling cap into the air, and shout, “*Io Pæan !* the Devil is conquered ;”—and, in the *mean* while, study to think it nothing miraculous that seven biographical volumes are given where one had been better ; and that several other things happen, very much as they from of old were known to do, and are like to continue doing.

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Were we required to characterise this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical, or Moral Age, but, above all others, the Mechanical Age. It is the Age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word ; the age which, with its whole undivided might, forwards, teaches and practises the great art of adapting means to ends. Nothing is now done directly, or by hand ; all is by rule and calculated contrivance. For the simplest operation, some helps and accompaniments, some cunning abbreviating process is in readiness. Our old modes of exertion are all discredited, and thrown aside. On every hand, the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one. The shuttle drops from the fingers of the weaver, and falls into iron fingers that ply it faster. The sailor furls his sail, and lays down his oar ; and bids a strong, unweared servant, on vaporous wings, bear him through the waters. Men have crossed oceans by steam ; the Birmingham Fire-king has visited the

fabulous East ; and the genius of the Cape, were there any Camoens now to sing it, has again been alarmed, and with far stranger thunders than Gama's. There is no end to machinery. Even the horse is stripped of his harness, and finds a fleet fire-horse yoked in his stead. Nay, we have an artist that hatches chickens by steam ; the very brood-hen is to be superseded ! For all earthly, and for some unearthly purposes, we have machines and mechanic furtherances ; for mincing our cabbages ; for casting us into magnetic sleep. We remove mountains, and make seas our smooth highway ; nothing can resist us. We war with rude Nature ; and, by our resistless engines, come off always victorious, and loaded with spoils.

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The true Past departs not, nothing that was worthy in the Past departs ; no Truth or Goodness realised by man ever dies, or can die ; but is all still here, and, recognised or not, lives and works through endless changes. If all things, to speak in the German dialect, are discerned by us, and exist for us, in an element of Time, and therefore of Mortality and Mutability ; yet Time itself reposes on Eternity : the truly Great and Transcendental has its basis and substance in Eternity ; stands revealed to us as Eternity in a vesture of Time. Thus in all Poetry, Worship, Art, Society, as one form passes into another nothing is lost : it is but the superficial, as it were the *body* only, that grows obsolete and dies ; under the mortal body lies a *soul* which is immortal ; which anew incarnates itself in fairer revelation ; and the Present is the living sum-total of the whole Past.

In Change, therefore, there is nothing terrible, nothing supernatural : on the contrary, it lies in the very essence of our lot and life in this world. To-day is not yesterday : we ourselves change ; how can our Works and Thoughts, if they are always to be the fittest, continue always the same ? Change, indeed, is painful ; yet ever needful : and if Memory have its force and

worth, so also has Hope. Nay, if we look well to it, what is all Derangement, and necessity of great Change, in itself such an evil, but the product simply of *increased resources* which the old *methods* can no longer administer ; of new wealth which the old coffers will no longer contain ? What is it, for example, that in our own day bursts asunder the bonds of ancient Political Systems, and perplexes all Europe with the fear of Change, but even this : the increase of social resources, which the old social methods will no longer sufficiently administer ? The new omnipotence of the Steam-engine is hewing asunder quite other mountains than the physical. Have not our economical distresses, those barnyard Conflagrations themselves, the frightfulest madness of our mad epoch, their rise also in what is a real increase : increase of Men ; of human Force ; properly, in such a Planet as ours, the most precious of all increases ? It is true again, the ancient methods of administration will no longer suffice. Must the indomitable millions, full of old Saxon energy and fire, lie cooped up in this Western Nook, choking one another, as in a Blackhole of Calcutta, while a whole fertile untenanted Earth, desolate for want of the ploughshare, cries : Come and till me, come and reap me ? If the ancient Captains can no longer yield guidance, new must be sought after : for the difficulty lies not in nature, but in artifice ; the European Calcutta-Blackhole has no walls but air ones and paper ones.—So too, Scepticism itself, with its innumerable mischiefs what is it but the sour fruit of a most blessed increase, that of Knowledge ; a fruit too that will not always continue *sour* ?

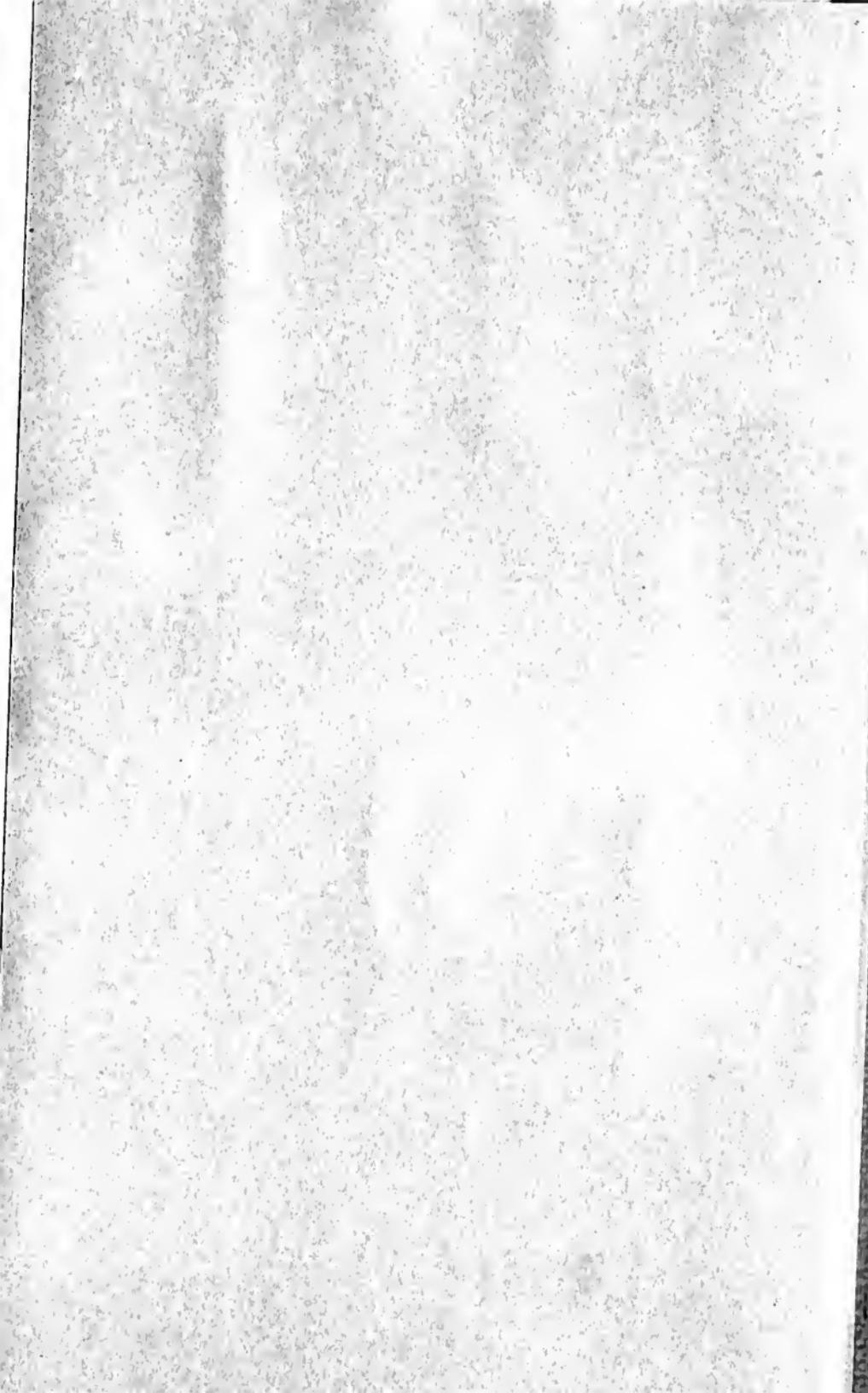
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It was a strange age that of Louis XV. ; in several points, a novel one in the history of mankind. In regard to its luxury and depravity, to the high culture of all merely practical and material faculties, and the entire torpor of all the purely contemplative and spiritual this era considerably resembles that of the Roman

Emperors. There too was external splendour and internal squalor ; the highest completeness in all sensual arts, including among these not cookery and its adjuncts alone, but even "effect-pointing" and "effect-writing ;" only the art of virtuous living was a lost one. Instead of Love for Poetry, there was "Taste" for it ; refinement in manners, with utmost coarseness in morals : in a word, the strange spectacle of a Social System, embracing large, cultivated portions of the human species, and founded only on Atheism. With the Romans, things went what we should call their natural course : Liberty, public spirit, quietly declined into *caput-mortuum* ; Self-love, Materialism, Baseness even to the disbelief in all possibility of Virtue, stalked more and more imperiously abroad ; till the body-politic, long since deprived of its vital circulating fluids, had now become a putrid carcass, and fell in pieces to be the prey of ravenous wolves. Then was there, under these Attilas and Alarics, a world-spectacle of destruction and despair, compared with which the often-commemorated "horrors of the French Revolution," and all Napoleon's wars, were but the gay jousting of a tournament to the sack of stormed cities. Our European community has escaped the like dire consummation ; and by causes which, as may be hoped, will always secure it from such. Nay, were there no other cause, it may be asserted, that in a commonwealth where the Christian Religion exists, where it once has existed, public and private Virtue, the basis of all Strength, never can become extinct ; but in every new age, and even from the deepest decline, there is a chance, and in the course of ages a certainty of renovation.

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